Calendar of Events

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

September 4 Monday Labor Day
September 10 Sunday Grandparents’ Day
September 12 Tuesday 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Special Town Election to approve funding for DPW equipment approved at the annual Town Meeting.
September 14 Thursday 9:40 p.m. New Harvest Moon 6:30 p.m. South Royalston Sewer Rate Payers Meeting at Town Hall
September 15 Friday Rosh Hashanah
September 16 Saturday 10 a.m. Friends of the Library Meeting. All welcome to come help plan Library support, this newsletter, and upcoming programs.
September 17 Sunday noon-4:00 p.m. Awesome Autumn Music Fest at the South Royalston Gazebo. Food truck, live music, face painting, balloon art and more.
September 23 Saturday 2:50 a.m. Autumnal Equinox – It’s fall!
September 23 - 29 7 p.m. Climate Preparedness Week at the Library. Join libraries around the world in spreading information and noting the effects of climate change.
September 28 Thursday 6:30 p.m. Green Building Practices Ladies’ B. program at the home of Andrea Lively. Call Laurie 978-249-5807 for more info.

Conservation Commission Opening
The Royalston Conservation Commission is seeking one new member. The commitment is for a three year time period. Duties include monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m at the Town Hall and site visits and other meetings as needed. Educational opportunities concerning the Wetlands Act are available on-line and in person.

Interested persons should write a letter to the Select Board expressing interest. You are also welcome to come to a monthly meeting. For more information please contact Maureen at 978-249-5138.

Sample Ballot:

Special Town Election
September 12, 2023 *Town Hall 10 AM-8PM*

Question 1.
*Shall the Town of Royalston be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bond issued in order to purchase a Vibratory Roller and Trailer with Dust Control for the DPW?*  YES ___  NO ___

Question 2.
*Shall the Town of Royalston be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bond issued in order to purchase a hydraulic heavy-duty lift system for the Town Garage?*  YES ___  NO ___

Applications for absentee and early vote ballots are available at the Town Clerk’s office or may be printed from the Town Clerk’s page on the Town of Royalston’s website and mailed to Town Clerk, P.O. Box 127, Royalston MA 01368

In-person early voting will take place at 5 School Street, Town Clerk’s Office September 1, 2023 from 9-11 a.m. & 3-5 p.m. September 6, 2023 from 10 a.m.-2p.m..

The last day to register to vote will take place at 5 School Street, Town Clerk’s Office September 1, 2023 from 9-11 a.m. & 3-5 p.m. All mail in applications must be postmarked no later than 9/1/23.

Special Town Election News
September 12, 2023 10 AM-8PM
Town Hall, 13 The Common
Barb Richardson, Town Clerk

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Sample Ballot:
Select Board Notes
Shelby Bronnes, Clerk

A special election will take place on September 12 at the Town Hall from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. It includes two ballot questions concerning funding to purchase two items for the DPW: a Hydraulic Lift System, and a Vibratory Roller with dust control. These ballot questions are required as part of the debt exclusion article approved at the Annual Town Meeting on June 10. As determined in the continuation of the Town Meeting on June 30, the hybrid police car failed to make the ballot and will not be voted on at this election. Details of the ballot will be posted no later than September 5th.

The fate of Fire Station #1 (next to the Church on the common) has been discussed at the last few select board meetings. What does the future hold for this building? Built in 1852, it currently houses the town’s antique fire engine and hearse. However, significant damage to the roof in recent years will need to be repaired. In September of 1974 the New England Antiquities Association held a study that declared the Common the best-preserved 19th century town center in the state. The Town will need to consider the historical value of this building in future planning. More attention and discussion will occur for all opinions to be heard.

South Royalston sewer rate payers annual meeting will take place at the Town Hall this year on Thursday, September 14 at 6:30 p.m and will last approximately one hour. We were unable to find an arrangement that worked to meet at the Second Congregational Church in South Royalston, and hope residents will attend the meeting at Town Hall to discuss on-going operations, long-term funding for maintenance and repairs and any adjustments made to the rates. Bills are due to go out mid-October with a November 30th due date. We hope to see you there!

It was voted last year to spend up to $50,000 to paint the exterior of Whitney Hall. The bid winner, a company called Empire, will hopefully have started by the time you’re reading this! Included in this project will be repairs to the ramp as well as removing and framing up the door and replacing some broken glass. Why, if this work was voted at the 2022 Annual Town Meeting, has this project taken over a year to begin? Well, we remind voters that the funding for this job was through a debt exclusion, which requires not only a vote from the floor of Town Meeting, but a ballot vote taken at a later date-like the process for funding the DPW equipment discussed above. The ballot vote was held, and approved by voters, in September of 2022. However, this was too late in the season to secure the necessary quotes and begin painting before the cold weather set in. Quotes were solicited and secured this summer and we are all looking forward to a freshly painted Whitney Hall!

Voice Your Opinion about the Future of Whitney Hall!
The online survey will close SEPTEMBER 15.
If you have not yet done so, please complete it quickly. Your voice matters. Find the survey at: https://tinyurl.com/whitneyhall

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

It’s that time of year: CodeRED™ Alert Test Call – Sep. 30, 2023 at 6p.m.
CodeRED™ is Royalston’s method of relaying critical messages to residents, property owners, and those with a vested interest in Royalston. The system is used for truly critical messages, such as an evacuation order, a major event affecting a large segment of our population, a missing child or elder, or by direct order of the Select Board. Your contact information is private. Caller ID shows CodeRED™ calls from 1-866-419-5000 as either “Emergency Notification” or “Emergency Comm.”, or from 1-855-969-4636 as either “General Notifications” or “General Comm.” For the last message sent, simply dial the number to play back that message. To register your landlines and other devices to receive notifications, please go to https://www.royalston-ma.gov and follow the CodeRED™ link.

September is National Preparedness Month. The theme for 2023 is Preparing for Older Adults, specifically “...those from communities disproportionately impacted by the all-hazard events, which continue to threaten the nation.”

About a fifth of Royalston’s population is over the age of 65, which is a higher rate than that of both Worcester County (16%) and the State of Massachusetts (17%). Five percent of Royalston’s seniors 65+ are considered to live in poverty. The past few years have seen an increasing number of weather-related events that have closed roads (some for years!) and/or knocked out power for days. Flu season is coming, and the expected fall increase in COVID-19 is already beginning.

If you are a senior, take advantage of Royalston’s Board of Health / Council on Aging health and vaccination clinics this fall. Make arrangements now with someone to keep you plowed and shoveled out over the winter, and to keep your bucket of walkway sand or ice melt filled. Those with on-line access can check out www.Ready.gov/older-adults and www.Ready.gov/disability. Both offer videos, check lists, and ways to monitor local emergency radio and television stations.

If you’re the neighbor of a senior, why not provide your contact info in case they have a situation they can’t handle without assistance? Keep an eye out, and if something’s amiss, check in with them. Of course, if there’s an EMERGENCY – DIAL 9-1-1.

Royalston IS an older community, but in general a very well-prepared and attentive community. Between preparedness, keeping a watchful eye on one another, and helping each other out when necessary, we do not see the level of problems experienced by many communities. Let’s keep it that way!

Preparedness beats panic every time! Be informed ~ Make a Plan!
**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 don’t contain plastic styrofoam, ties, and/or other non-paper/non-cardboard items. If you have questions, see the attendant. SAFETY REMINDER: Be careful around the roll-offs. Keep an eye on your children and pets when at the facility. Cars backing up and spaces between the containers are potential areas of concern.

New annual stickers were due July 1st. If you do not have yours yet, see Tony at the facility. A reminder that all trash bags need to have a trash sticker on them prior to dumping and demo is not free. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

- Permitted trash haulers are encouraged to bring collected recyclables to RRATS.
- Fluorescent light bulbs need to be in original or similar packaging in order for us to recycle.
- Air conditioners contain freon and are not to be deposited in metal. See attendant for proper location for collection.
- The annual hazardous waste collection day is Saturday, September 23rd. Royalston has a limited number of slots available on a first come first served basis. Go to franklincountywastedistrict.org or call 413-772-2438 to pre-register and to find out what will be accepted.
- Ticks, ticks, and more ticks. Mosquitoes too. Check pets and humans when coming back inside.

Be safe, get vaxed. COVID is still among us. Get ready for the flu season. There will be a flu clinic at Town Hall on October 11th sponsored by COA and BOH.

**COVID-19 Paxlovid Telehealth Service**

As many know, there is an antiviral medication that has received emergency approval for the treatment of COVID. It is two different medicines that reduce the severity of the disease. It’s free for anyone. If you don’t have a physician or need to be able to access the treatment, Massachusetts has a telehealth service through Mass.gov to deliver the medication. Telehealth is available to anyone 18 and over living in Massachusetts who tests positive for COVID-19 and is experiencing symptoms. All you have to do is go to mass.gov/CovidTelehealth and fill out a questionnaire or call 833-273-6330. The prescription can be sent to a local pharmacy or have it shipped to you. They say it will be delivered in 24 hours.

**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 and voluntary donation of $3.00 is appreciated.

Royalston Department of Public Works

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

Superintendent Jaret R. Thiem is pleased to report Royalston has received a municipal paving grant from the Commonwealth. The grant is for numbered, municipally-owned routes. The State decides what roads, what work will be done, and pays 100% of the cost. Route 32 was chosen and work has already begun in preparation for the resurfacing of the entire Royalston segment, from the Athol town line to the Richmond, NH state line.

Work on Whitney Hall began late August and should be completed by the end of September, weather permitting.

The Brown Road culvert has been ordered, and is expected to be finished being built within the 8 to 12-week lead time required. Once built, we will be scheduling installation, expected to be by October.

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.

**Greetings from the Fire Department,**

In the first 6 months of the year the Fire Department has responded to the following calls for service

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMS Calls</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Fire Calls</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure Fires</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mutual Aid</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimney fires</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Total calls</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I am excited to announce that again this year the Fire Department has been awarded a FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant in the amount of $63,070 to replace an obsolete and unsafe breathing air compressor, with a new modern NFPA-compliant unit. The balance of the funds will be used for training to host a Hazardous Materials First Responder course that is required for all firefighters.

The Fire Department has been working to maintain the fleet of vehicles. The upgrades to the rescue truck funded by the ARPA are almost complete. We are just waiting on the vendor to install the new radios. The tires were replaced on our tanker truck at a cost of $2,800, the tires that were replaced were 24 years old and well past the suggested replacement age per NFPA. We are also working with the Royalston DPW to perform preventive maintenance on the Fire Department vehicles, and we are hopeful the Town will support the purchase of vehicle lifts for the DPW garage that will be used jointly by DPW and the Fire Department.

It has come to my attention that several homes in town do not have adequate smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Please call the station or email me at chieffrd@royalston-ma.gov if you would like us to come out and inspect your smoke and CO alarms, we can install free battery powered smoke and CO alarms that were provided by the Red Cross for the residents of Royalston.

Lastly, the Fire Department is looking for new members; we are looking for people willing to serve as firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians, and First Responders. We especially need members who are available during the day as many of our members work out of town. Funds are available for new members to attend Fire and EMS training. Anyone interested in joining the department or who has questions, please email the chief at chieffrd@royalston-ma.gov, or call the Fire Station at 978-249-8138 and leave a message.

*Stay Safe, Chief Jack*
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
Robert Fairchild and Norah Dooley
Don Jarvenpaa
The Gronowicz family
Richard and Rose Lawrence
Gordon and Judy Shaw

Thank you
The Royalston Academy for funding the summer children’s programs.
The Friends of the Library for prizes and refreshments.
Maureen Blasco, Beth Gospodarek, Amy Newland, Patti Stanko,
Kristi Schellie, and Norah Dooley for all their help especially with the Crazy Hat Parade and Ice Cream Social when COVID pushed me into isolation. And to Barb Richardson for going above and beyond, stepping in and making an amazing ice cream truck (with the help of Jim Richardson), and handling all aspects of organizing and setting up the event.

Summer Reading Contest Winners
The winners of this summer’s reading contest were chosen at the Crazy Hat Parade and ice cream social on August 4. The adult winner was Ann Verrelli; young adult, Jon Valliere, young adult runner up, Kaylee Caisson, and the two children’s winners were Tayla Newton and Beatrice Valliere. Thanks to the Friends of the Library for the prizes.

Art Exhibit
Gordon Morrison’s amazing botanical paintings will be on display through September. While centered on plants from four different habitats, they are filled with all sorts of other lifeforms. Each time you look, you notice something else. There are also guides to identify all the plants in each one.

If you are interested in having a display of your artwork, contact the Library. We are always looking for new artists (or people who haven’t had an exhibit in a while) to mount a show.

Climate Preparedness Week
Since 2014, organizations, especially libraries, around the world have celebrated Climate Prep Week. It is to bring awareness to the climate and sustainability. Stop by during September to consider the changes happening with our climate and write on a ribbon what you love about your town, your life, the environment, or your feelings. We’ll hang them in the Library. From September 23 - 29, the Library will have information specific to climate change in Massachusetts.

Royalston Herbarium
Kathy Morris

When the Library was built the North room was a museum and a reading room. It housed a varied collection of items, many of which have found their way to the Historical Society Museum. There was a large rock and mineral collection which has been donated to the Historical Society. There was also a scientifically labeled and organized collection of pressed plants called a herbarium. It’s obvious the sliding narrow shelves that house the herbarium were specifically made for that purpose when our Library was constructed.

In 2005, we celebrated Bio-diversity Days with a display of the collection of pressed plants with Noah Siegel and Elizabeth Farnsworth leading a botanical walk. The specimens stayed tucked away in the far corner cabinet until Mack Hickler, Elizabeth Farnsworth, and Robert Bertim examined the collection and validated the identification of the specimens. Also finding their way to the specimens were silverfish (Leptisma saccharina), small, flightless insects that eat paper. The specimens were bundled up and transported to the freezers at Harvard Forest for a few weeks. The shelves were disinfected and the specimens replaced.

Moving forward with our project of digitizing items, I looked at the specimens again. While I only saw one silverfish, I contacted Matt Hickler and asked if he had any contacts who had low temperature freezers and he recommended a contact at the University of Massachusetts. Then Matt did some further digging. Reverend James Atwood Bates, the donor of the herbarium, was the minister of the South Royalston Congregational Church from 1898-1903 and a renowned botanist. He has a large number of specimens in many collections including Harvard and Yale. He was President of the American Fern Society in 1910, a charter member of the Vermont Botanical Club and contributed to Fern Bulletin, Fern Journal, and Bulletin of the Vermont Botanical Club. In 1860, he and his new wife traveled to Ceylon (today’s Sri Lanka) where he was a missionary for three years. He collected many items from his travels, which may explain some ‘unknown’ photographs that could be Ceylon in the Library’s collection. We are awaiting a decision on who will digitize the herbarium and the best site for this collection.

Yoga
Yoga continues on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. in the upstairs of the Town Hall. Jess Schanz leads participants through a series of movements to increase core strength, gain balance, and increase flexibility and stamina. All you need is a mat and a free hour to give yourself some self-care.

Preschool Story Time Resumes
Join Brooke Coleman on non-holiday Mondays at 2:00 p.m. at preschool story time. There are stories, themed crafts, play time, and healthy snacks as well as a chance to meet other caregivers and preschool children. All are welcome and there is no registration necessary.
Some of the new materials at your library

**Adult Fiction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acevedo, Elizabeth</td>
<td><em>Family Lore</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker, Chandler</td>
<td><em>Cutting Teeth</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown, Sandra</td>
<td><em>Out of Nowhere</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Castillo, Linda</td>
<td><em>An Evil Heart</em></td>
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<td>Center, Katherine</td>
<td><em>Hello Stranger</em></td>
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<td>deWitt, Patrick</td>
<td><em>The Librarianist</em></td>
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<td>Gong, Chloe</td>
<td><em>Immortal Longings</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Heller, Peter</td>
<td><em>The Last Ranger</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jaworowski, Ken</td>
<td><em>Small Town Sins</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kistler, Bonnie</td>
<td><em>Her, Too</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Koontz, Dean</td>
<td><em>After Death</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Koryta, Michael</td>
<td><em>An Honest Man</em></td>
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<td>Lange, Tracey</td>
<td><em>The Connellys of County Down</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>LaPena, Shari</td>
<td><em>Everyone Here is Lying</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lippman, Laura</td>
<td><em>Prom Mom</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macomber, Debbie</td>
<td><em>Must Love Flowers</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mallery, Susan</td>
<td><em>The Happiness Plan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllister, Gillian</td>
<td><em>Just Another Missing Person</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Patchett, Ann</td>
<td><em>Tom Lake</em></td>
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<td>Patterson, James</td>
<td><em>Obsessed</em></td>
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<td>Reichs, Kathy</td>
<td><em>The Bone Hacker</em></td>
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<td>Rudnick, Paul</td>
<td><em>Farrell Covington and the Limits of Style</em></td>
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<td>Russo, Richard</td>
<td><em>Somebody's Fool</em></td>
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<td>Silva, Daniel</td>
<td><em>The Collector</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Silver, Elizabeth</td>
<td><em>The Majority</em></td>
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<td>Thos, Brad</td>
<td><em>Dead Fall</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vee, Julia</td>
<td><em>Ebony Gate</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Whitehead, Colson</td>
<td><em>Crook Manifesto</em></td>
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**Children's Fiction**

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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blabey, Aaron</td>
<td><em>The Bad Guys in Let the Games Begin</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Davis, Rachael</td>
<td><em>Over the Rainbow</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Janicki, Peggy</td>
<td><em>The Secret Pocket</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin, Ann</td>
<td><em>Karen's Haircut</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Owens, L.L.</td>
<td><em>The Life Cycle of an Earthworm</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rockwell, Lizzy</td>
<td><em>It is Time!</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Berger, Carin</td>
<td><em>In the Night Garden</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clanton, Ben</td>
<td><em>A Super Scary Narwhaalloween</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hahn, Sabina</td>
<td><em>I Am a Dragon!</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Holt, Bob</td>
<td><em>The Red Jacket</em></td>
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<td><em>The Skull</em></td>
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<td>Teague, Mark</td>
<td><em>We Are Going to be Pals!</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>West, Tracey</td>
<td><em>Dawn of the Light Dragon</em></td>
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**Children’s Nonfiction**

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**Young Adult**

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<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ogle, Rex</td>
<td><em>Four Eyes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pfeffer, Susan</td>
<td><em>Life As We Knew It</em></td>
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**Audiobooks**

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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rabess, Cecilia</td>
<td><em>Everything’s Fine</em></td>
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**DVDs:** *Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret, Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3, Love Again, and Sisu*

**Adult Non-fiction**

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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hollis, B. Dylan</td>
<td><em>Baking Yesteryear</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hoyt, Erich</td>
<td><em>Seasons of the Whale</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jena, Anupam</td>
<td><em>Random Acts of Medicine</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**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.

**Royalston Shakespeare Company**

Above is a “before shot” of the first 15 minutes of rehearsal for this year’s Royalston Shakespeare Company workshop production of *The Tempest.*

And this is the curtain call for the production: fifteen kids, funding from the Cultural Council, 9 days, beautiful Royalston Town Hall and a famous script converging to conjure goodly creatures, a brave new world, and such things as dreams are made on.
Wildlife and Wonders

Kathy Chencharik submitted an article she recently found about foam on the river, which was on the front page of the Athol Daily News April 22, 1980. 43 years ago!. Along with the article, she also sent the reply dated April 24, 1980.

Dear Kathy Chencharik,

Enclosed is a tear sheet of a front page of the Daily News which has the answer to your question about the foam in the Millers River. I hope you are pleased with the response. I am also returning your slide; we do not have the facilities to reproduce this for newspaper use.

Yours truly,
Allen LeBlanc, Staff reporter

Miller’s ‘Head’ is Natural

Accumulations of white foam in the Millers River and other area streams consist of “natural organic” matter, according to Roland Dupuis, acting regional engineer for the Division of Water Pollution Control of the state’s Department of Environmental Quality Engineering.

Dupuis comments were made in response to a query from Kathy Chencharik of River Road, who said, “I know that Miller’s beer is supposed to have a head on it, but Millers River?”

Chencharik speculated that the foam might be related to a chemical additive used in the Baldwinville waste treatment plant, but Ralph Cutter, chief operator of the plant, said that the white foamy stuff is not in any way related to the operation of his plant.

Dupuis said that the foam is especially noticeable after a rain, when water running across the ground picks up “surfactants and organics” from vegetable matter including leaves and pine needles. These materials mix with the water and are aerated, especially after the stream goes over a small waterfall or drop, Dupuis explained, adding that the resulting foam “often will obtain a brown tinge at its outer extremities.”

He emphasized that this is not considered pollution. Dupuis said that queries from the public about this common foam became so frequent that several years ago a University of Massachusetts chemistry professor, Oliver Zajicek, prepared a research paper on the phenomenon.

September Pasture and Swale
Linda LeBlanc

I like to hand graze my mare along the swale bordering the barn’s pasture (Athol, MA). Rather than me taking her for a walk, however, she takes me. She falls upon the clovers and pasture grasses; I scrub down to look at the wildflowers, sedges, and rushes.

The pasture and swale are classified as cultural grasslands according to MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. They are dominated by planted, non-native grass and are of conservation interest primarily because of their importance to grassland birds such as the Grasshopper Sparrow.

Grasshoppers are indeed springing up at our feet, and small spiders as well. There are bees and wasps, of course, and long-horned beetles, moths, and butterflies. Many of the non-native naturalized wildflowers are attractive to these pollinators as nectar sources. The bumblebees have returned to the pasture clover after a devastating bout with throat mites in the 80s and 90s. Honeybees also appear to be returning after some years of absence. Small Pickerel Frogs are flushing underfoot as we walk. In previous wetter years it was the young Green Frogs. In January, I watched from the barn door as a Bobcat patrolled the frozen ditch. Red Foxes appeared in summers when the wild berries were ripe. Another time a small gray Opossum crept away from under our feet.

Despite all this natural richness, the pasture and its swale are human creations. They require artificial maintenance by mowing and grazing. And such cultural grasslands have impacts. First, they replace and fragment natural habitats and communities. Also, opportunistic non-native grasses and wildflowers can crowd out native species. In addition, non-native plants directly affect the insect herbivores that eat them and reproduce on them (or not) – and thus the consumers further up the food web.

Ah, there’s the rub. The grassland’s appearance of a “species diverse” habitat may not be the best indicator of habitat health. A better measure is to understand whether non-native invaders equal native plants ecologically. And studies show that non-native plants support significantly fewer caterpillars, and significantly fewer species (Burghardt, et al. 2010). Non-natives may have different odors, palatability, and levels of toxicity from native host plants – depressing the overall abundance of caterpillars and richness of caterpillar species.

It is with mixed feelings that I graze my mare along the pasture’s swale. But for now, I am listening to Vidalia’s rhythmic chewing against the bee hum. The cricket’s song is soft, and the nearby Towhee calls its name like a question. And there is a feeling of well-being for me and my friend as we stand alongside each other in the pasture and its swale.

Royalston Fish and Game Club
Clubhouse phone: 978-249-3004.

Luck of the Draw Horseshoes is continuing through September 26th. Shoes 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 year-end party, participation in at least 10 weeks is required.

Trap Shooting for all skill levels is also continuing on Wednesdays, at 5 p.m. through November 1st. Non-members are welcome to join in for $4/round (25 clays.) 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!) 2023 memberships are still available. Obtain at the Clubhouse, $50.

Thank you to these consistent supporters of the newsletter:

Days Gone By Antiques - Bob and Lorraine Casinghino
Paul Montero - Professional Land Surveyor
Sam’s Canine Companions - Sherry A. Miner
Mark O’Connor - Excavation/Contracting
Luna Body Therapeutics - Carolyn Cullen
Renovations R Us - Bob LeBlanc
The Kitchen Garden
Red Apple Farm
CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD NEWS

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

It’s a girl! Former Royalston homie Emily (Mangum) Finley and her husband Sam welcomed their first child Caroline Pamela into the world on August 1st. Emily grew up in Royalston, attending the Village School for kindergarten, then Royalston Community School, Athol Middle School, and Monty Tech. She graduated from Bridgewater State University in 2019 with a Communications degree and now resides in Chesterfield, VA, where she is a Project Manager on a communications team. Her husband is a Black Hawk helicopter pilot for the VA Army National Guard. Caroline’s proud grandparents are Melanie Mangum of Memphis, TN, and Jeff Mangum of South Royalston.

Abigail S. Divoll, age 25, resident of Royalston, MA, tragically passed away on July 1, 2023.

Abigail was born on March 31, 1998, to Rebecca and Randy Divoll in Greenfield, MA. Abby grew up in Royalston and attended Royalston Community School, Athol Royalston Middle School, Athol High School and Franklin Pierce University where she earned her bachelor’s degree in accounting. Abby worked at C & S Wholesale Grocers as an accountant since graduating.

Abigail was an avid traveler and intended on visiting all the National Parks. She recently planned and went on a phenomenal trip to Italy with her mom, Anthony and Molly. Abby was well known for her love and generosity for her family and friends. She was always planning, organizing and creating projects on her Cricut, especially Molly’s latest t-shirt design. Abby loved helping John out with sugaring and promoting Divoll’s Sugarhouse and was a regular fixture in the stands at all of Anthony’s soccer games. Abby enjoyed taking pictures. You would always find her with her Polaroid camera at any major event. Abby’s love for her family ran deep and strong; she was a kind and generous friend. She was always one to put others first, whether it was babysitting, providing late night snacks for her friends, or always lending a ride when needed. She knew what people needed before they knew they needed it. Abby was a light in every person’s life that she crossed paths with.

Abigail is predeceased by her grandfather Michael Finocchio and her cousin Amanda Putney. She is survived by her parents Becky and Randy Divoll, siblings John & his girlfriend Jordan, Molly, Anthony and Dante, grandparents Susan Finocchio and John and Helen Divoll, aunts/uncles Missy Freitas, Amy & John Clark, Michael & Tiana Finocchio, Kristin Mirabile, Karen & Gene Kolimaga, Sally & Ed Wheeler, Brenda & Jim Putney, Becky LaBelle & Dan Valliere, Lynn Divoll & TJ LeBouf, Becky LaBelle & Dan Valliere, Lynn Divoll & TJ LeBouf, Mary & Bill Ward, and Craig & Brandy Divoll, Cousins Emma, Elena, Santino, Troy, Tony, Natalie, Talon, Megan, Kelsey, Hayssa, Kendall, Marquita, Elizabeth, Corey, Derek, Jessica, Amy, Emily, Josh, Matt, Robert, Amber, Michelle, Joselyn, Olivia, Tim, Russell, Amelia, Liam, Aubrey and close friends Justin, Matt and Kiki. Abby also had a very close relationship with Gunnar and Evelyn who she loved spending time with. Abby loved and was loved by so many more, she would also want to remind us that she was Grandma’s favorite.
Does this grand photo of Whitney Hall (the White School) evoke happy memories? Do you remember school days at RCS? We hope so and ask all who attended elementary school in Royalston to join us Sunday, October 1 at 12:30 to celebrate and share memories with your classmates.

Where: Royalston Fish and Game Club  
49 Main Rd. Phillipston, Mass.

When: Sunday, October 1 from 12:30 - 3:00  
12:30 short meeting  
1 p.m. Harvest dinner with basket raffles immediately following.

What: Harvest Dinner (turkey, beverages, and condiments supplied by the reunion committee. We are asking classmates to help provide the following menu items: mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, rolls, green beans, squash, cranberry sauce, and desserts.)

Please RSVP by Saturday Sept 23 to Rose Lawrence 978-249-6814 or Jan St. Jean at 978-928-5133/978-249-9636 if you plan to attend and if you can help with one of the listed menu items. Monetary donations may be made to the South Royalston School Reunion Association.

**What is Happening at the Village School?**
*Rise Richardson, director*

With the fun outdoor Summer Programs over, school starts on Wednesday, September 6. There is one opening available in preschool, and two openings in kindergarten. Call 978 249 3505 for more information.

In September and October, science classes take place outside, observing nature and recording observations. The Kindergarten-6th grade classes go on an hour long hike across the Camp Caravan property every Friday afternoon, discovering something new on each hike.

Dean’s Beans Coffee- Get yours delivered once a month to the Village School. Order whole beans or ground. Find the order due dates and the order form at https://www.villageschoolma.org/shop/ and order online- it’s easy! You can pick up the coffee just inside the school entrance.

**Back-to-School Book Review**  
*Mary C. Barclay*

If you would like to recommend a book or other media, write up a brief review and send it along to the RCN.

*Lessons Learned and Cherished: The Teacher Who Change My Life*  
By Deborah Roberts; published May 2, 2023; Landscape Books

Most of us, when asked to share a story about a special teacher, immediately recall one or more teachers who made a positive difference in our lives. Ms. Roberts has assembled more than five dozen of these moving stories into a wonderful book that can be read story-by-story, or cover-to-cover. A few chapters tell of teachers from Ms. Roberts’ years as a student. The other chapters tell the stories of famous, noteworthy, and accomplished adults, whose lives were changed by special teachers.

If you want a feel-good read, THIS IS THE BOOK!

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

Thanks to all who participated in, or otherwise supported June’s golf event to benefit the Monty Tech Foundation Scholarship Fund. The event was a huge success, raising $16,000 in donations and sponsorships, which goes directly to graduation grants of tools, cash, and scholarships! In other summer news, middle school students were invited to participate in a summer camp at Monty Tech. Over two, one-week sessions, the camp offered introductory activities in the fields of Engineering, IT, Culinary Arts, Graphic Communication, Cosmetology, and CAD Drafting. In addition, the new Rising Freshmen Academy for incoming ninth graders, a cooperative learning program, helped reinforce math, ELA and technology concepts using real-life situations. The academy served 167 students, who not only learned, but also had the opportunity to know one another before the school year.

As for outgoing students, members of the class of 2023 were asked about their future plans. About forty percent of graduates reported they were planning to enter the workforce. Fifteen percent plan to go to two-year colleges, and thirty-nine percent plan to attend four-year colleges. Other responses included plans to serve in the military or go to technical school. In line with recent trends, the breakdown by program showed that the clusters with the highest percentage of students entering the workforce were the Construction and Services clusters (such as Electrical, Plumbing, Welding, Auto Body, and Auto Tech), and those with the highest percentage of students planning to attend college were the Health and Technology clusters (such as Health Occupations, Dental Assisting, Veterinary Science, Engineering, CAD/ Drafting, and Graphic Communications). It should also be noted that many who have gone on to careers and into the military are also continuing their educations.

Monty Tech continues to expand its offerings. This year a new position, Professional Skills Instructor, has been created to address students’ knowledge and skills in three of the six strands of the Vocational Technical Education Frameworks: Employability, Management, and Technological. The Commonwealth Corporation has awarded Monty Tech a $500,000 Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success Grant. This grant is designed to help place unemployed and underemployed workers in Massachusetts businesses by providing occupational training and skills. With it, Monty Tech plans to add Auto Repair as one of its CTI (Career Technical Initiative) Training programs over the next 18 months. The grant funds will also supplement existing funds to enable the Auto Body and Collision Repair program to replace its outdated spray booth. Altogether, the school has been awarded nearly $2.5M in competitive grants over the past two years, including the Commonwealth Corporation grant, Skills Capital Grants, state competitive grants, and local foundation grants.

Lastly, as mentioned in the July/August newsletter, admissions policies are under review. Specifically, Monty Tech is actively looking for ways to limit bias in their admissions policies and procedures. Any policy changes, once finalized and approved, will be described in an upcoming newsletter.
**Historical Society News**

On recent biweekly workdays, the museum has been getting organized and updated. A team has been archiving documents and photographs. Artifacts are being sorted and cataloged. A revised acquisitions and de-acquisitions policy has been proposed, tweaked and finalized. All members are invited to vote on these changes as well as a few changes to the group’s constitution at the Society’s next regular meeting October 20th at the Museum.

On top of this work with the collection, planning is going forward for some exciting temporary exhibits. Coinciding with the 200th anniversary of the Ladies’ B, the Society is planning an exhibit for next summer featuring “Women’s Lives in Royalston”.

On October 22, the popular “living history” cemetery tours will be back using Riverside Cemetery as the setting. A group of volunteers has researched lives of the people buried there and is working on scripts. So far, there are abolitionists, factory workers, Pleasant Street neighbors, 49ers, a state senator, a fern expert, a soldier from 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.

It is common knowledge that the Society’s president Peter Kra-niak has been keeping the group afloat for decades. He personally opened the museum every weekend, maintained the entrance, collected new artifacts, and seasonably decorated in his inimitable style for years. Right now, his health is not good, so please keep Peter in your thoughts.

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**Royalston South Village Revitalization News**

Dear neighbors,

We hope you will join us at the Awesome Autumn Music Fest at the Gazebo on Sunday, September 17 from noon to 4:00 p.m. RSVR and the Royalston Arts Council join to present the event.

Jim Bennett is organizing the musical entertainment. There will be family-friendly activities like Julie Crosby of Julie Balloonsie balloon animals, face-painting and we hope to have a food truck. There will be a Lottery Table and other activities.

Peter Gagliardi and the Save our Store Subcommittee continue to meet to explore all possibilities. They are thinking of the project as being more of a restaurant that also has some things to sell (to be determined).

Park Subcommittee: Thanks to the recent Town Meeting, a major obstacle was removed and the Park Subcommittee is now looking for a free or affordable landscape architect to help them design the park using community input that was gathered last spring. We would also like to recognize Paul Montero who gifted a portion of cost of survey of Pete and Henry park to complete Conservation Restriction for the park.

A huge shout out to DPW Chief Jaret Thiem and his team: they scooped out the refuse by the back door of the Fire Station and replaced it with tailings. The DPW also placed a granite step at the front of the Gazebo and it looks great. The stone was purchased at half price from Tom Mann of TS Mann Lumber Company. We plan to extend the edging to the stone and dress the area with small stones.

The Whitney Hall Marketing Feasibility Study, a 9 month study funded by the MA Rural and Small-Town Grant Program, is in the community engagement phase. The grant was written by SelectBoard Chair Deb D’Amico. It is being conducted by the consulting firm Keen Independent Research. If you were not able to attend the Public Meeting on June 12 and have not filled out the survey, you can go to https://keenindependent.com/whitneyhall/ Click on “Participate in the Virtual Workshop” to fill in the 10-minute survey. The study hotline is (978)245-5831 and the team can be reached at WhitneyHall@keenindependent.com

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.

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**Ladies’ Benevolent Society**

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

Since the last newsletter, the Ladies’ Society has gathered together twice. The June 29th meeting saw 16 in attendance. Treasurer Maureen Blasco updated members on the Society’s financial condition. Scholarship Committee member Theresa Quinn reported that three recipients had been awarded $300 LBS Scholarships, including, Samantha West (in memory of Maxine Eliot Wilcox); Nicole A. Bellabarba (in memory of Helen Pauline Crumb Smith); and Lillian R. Johnson (in memory of Nancy S. Bolton.) Charlotte Weltzin’s program on Women’s Health was so well received that she will return next June. She can be reached at trillium@mass.rr.com. Also, the group held its annual family outing at Packard Pond in August.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is Thursday, September 28, with hostess Andrea Lively. The topic is Green Building Practices. All are welcome to attend. This will also be a planning meeting for the LBS’s 200th Anniversary Year activities. Non-members are asked to RSVP with President Laurie Deveneau at 978-249-5807 or lmdeveneau@msn.com.
Garden Notes  
August 24, 2023

Nine inches of rain in July. It could have been worse. The garden has not only survived the onslaught, it has thrived. With only a few exceptions, growth has been dramatic. A case in point is the tomatoes. The cherry tomatoes, trained to climb on chicken wire have reached the top and are working their way down. Most gardeners stake or cage their larger tomatoes. I let them go, to sprawl to their heart’s content. And sprawl they have, far exceeding their allotted space. Tomato set is monumental. That’s the good news. The less-than-good news is that they are exhibiting a decided disinclination to ripen. I pick a handful or two of cherry tomatoes every couple of days but not one full-sized tomato yet. This would be an unfortunate season to experience an early fall frost. Brassicas have exceeded all expectations. I plant many more than necessary since heretofore yields have been generally disappointing. Not this year. I am awash in broccoli and cabbage and cauliflower and Brussels sprouts. The beans have been surprisingly prolific. Bean plants are particularly susceptible to rotting under wet conditions. Despite the wettest of conditions, there is not a sign of rot. Go figure. Continuing the litany of successes: potatoes. I am generally satisfied with a yield of ten pounds for each pound planted. Yields from my two early varieties are closer to twenty pounds. First corn harvest was six days ago. Since then, we’ve eaten corn…six times. With three different maturity dates, we can anticipate at least a month of daily (?) consumption.

The season has not been bereft of setbacks (none of which I can ascribe to the ‘big wet’). Recall, in spring, the spinach and parsnips failed to germinate. You cannot set back more than that. Peppers, from the day they were transplanted, failed to grow. It is only recently that they’ve begun to look like pepper plants. It may be too late. For the third year in a row, the zucchinis failed to provide much in the way of zucchinis. There will not be a fourth year. The onions performed as they almost always perform: sometime in July, the leaves die off (from an unidentified fungus), leaving me with onions far smaller than their potential. Maybe it’s time to bite the bullet and buy a fifty-pound sack of onions in the fall.

We are in the midst of the harvest and preservations season. The perishable crops (cherry tomatoes, beans, squash, and cucumbers) must be picked every two or three days. The root crops and the brassicas are a bit more forgiving. Other than a batch of bread-and-butter pickles, a batch of chili sauce, and some wild grape conserves, we do no canning. Additional jams are made in the winter (when the wood cookstove is in full operation mode) from fruits and berries we’ve frozen during the summer. Among the vegetables, peas, beans, corn, broccoli, and cauliflower are frozen, best used in soups and stews rather than a stand-alone side dish. We’ve even taken to freezing tomato puree, an item previously canned.

More of the same in September. And, while I’m not particularly looking forward to it, I’m prepared to take it on.

Larry Siegel

Oak Tree

Most mornings, as I walk from house to car, I spend time picking up sticks. Our walkway is often strewn with twigs and small branches that fall from the oak tree that grows nearby. This is a giant tree, with limbs that arch over our walkway and stretch to the grass beyond.

The smallest branches fall from the farthest edges of the tree’s canopy, over the grassy rise to the west of our walk. They are twigs really, so I let them lie, moving them when the grass needs mowing. The walkway is close to the tree, yet the branches that fall here are only a bit larger – no more than a dozen or so inches in length. These I toss into the woods north of the house, where they can decompose out of harm’s way. Sometimes the trip from canopy to ground is a far enough drop that a branch will smash to pieces on impact. A quick flick of my toe clears these shattered remains to the side where they seem to disappear overnight.

I don’t know what causes these tree fragments to come down. Perhaps the tree is shedding itself of its weaker parts, saving energy for its strongest limbs to stretch and grow. Tom assures me that this is a natural process as the tree continues to grow. However, there is no mystery to the larger limbs we find from time to time, lying intact across our walk. These come down after a windstorm, their trunk ends jagged and torn. These are not branches the tree intended to lose.

All this limb clearing has me curious about our oak tree. Tom says the tree was here when he built our house over 40 years ago. It seems past time to get better acquainted. Since my tree-climbing days are long gone I go inside the house and climb the stairs instead.

A west-facing window on our second floor brings me eye-to-eye with the tree’s lower canopy, its branches almost close enough to touch. This is another world that I return to again and again from my second-floor perch. Here leaves rustle and whisper. Birds stop for a moment to call across our lawns before moving on. Woodpeckers work their way up and around the trunk, searching for insects. A squirrel disappears into the topmost branches. Our oak is a busy place, a stop-over, a refuge, a source of food and shelter. But my second-floor view is only half-way up this giant tree. Beyond is a world I will never see. Perhaps I am not meant to.

For years I have walked under the oak tree’s canopy distracted by the minor details of our lives. The times I have stopped to watch its branches dip and sway have been too few. With her dropped limbs and fallen twigs the oak tree has taught me to pay attention, from time to time, to the mystery of a wider world. For that I am grateful.

Deb D’Amico
The Friends of the Phinehas S. Newton Library invite you to:

**Join or renew your membership** in the Friends of the Library.

Not only a free **source of entertainment and information**, our Library is also an important **community center**. It is a place to get books, magazines, audio books, movies, and music both in hard copy and electronically. Computers and fast Internet access are freely available. Items such as a state parks pass, ice cream makers, folding tables, hot spots, a digital projector with screen can all be easily borrowed. Its **newsletter** keeps residents informed and connected and creates a continuous historical record of our lives.

The Friends of the Library is an active volunteer group, which supports our Library in these efforts. **New members and new ideas are always needed. Please contact the library to get involved.**

**Recent accomplishments of the Friends of the Library include:**

- Producing and mailing nearly 24 years of **the Royalston Community Newsletter**, sent without charge to every household in town.

- **Purchasing** patron favorites such as DVDs, CDs, and audiobooks as well as Wowbrary and maintaining a Little Free Library in the South Village.

- **Facilitating enrichment programs**, including local authors; basket-making, flower arranging, guache painting and cooking workshops; school vacation presentations with kite-flying, hawks and animals; the Summer Reading Programs for big kids and preschoolers, which featured room-sized whales, music, crazy hats and a homemade ice cream truck; **The Royalston Shakespeare Company’s version of The Tempest**, live music accompanying a silent film, a contra dance, and to top it off - weekly yoga.

- **Archiving** historical records stored at the library, including the history of the Ladies’ Benevolent Society
- **Fundraising**, including the famous plant sale and garden tour.

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**Friends of the Phinehas S. Newton Library**

**Membership and Contribution Form**

Name: ___________________________________  
Address: ___________________________________  

Phone: ________________________________  
E-mail: ________________________________  

Memberships:
- Family $10.00 __________
- Supporting $25.00 __________
- Donation $__________ __________

I would like to help with Friend’s projects [ ]

Tax deductible. Make checks payable to:
Friends of the P. S. Newton Library, PO Box 133, Royalston MA 01368

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*The Phinehas S. Newton Library is a wonderful resource for Royalston residents. Your donations and ideas enable The Friends of the Library to continue to support the library director, Kathy Morris, and Board of Trustees in their important work. Thank you for your support.*
Recipe of the month:

Shakshuka
Royalston tomatoes are ready and Shakshuka, a classic North African and Middle Eastern dish, is a great way to savor them. It’s made from simple, healthy ingredients and is vegetarian. Shakshuka literally means “a mixture” and the traditional version uses tomatoes, onions and spices as the base with eggs poached on top.

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium onion, diced
1 red bell pepper, seeded and diced
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon cumin
¼ teaspoon chili powder
About 2 1/2 cups chopped fresh tomatoes (or 1 28-ounce can whole peeled tomatoes with the juice).
6 large eggs
salt and pepper, to taste
Optional garnishes (mix and match): fresh chopped cilantro, fresh chopped parsley, crumbled feta, or slices of avocado

INSTRUCTIONS: Heat olive oil in a large sauté pan on medium heat. Add the chopped bell pepper and onion and cook for 5 minutes or until the onion becomes translucent. Add garlic and spices and cook an additional minute. Pour in the tomatoes and juice and break down into chunks using a large spoon. Season with salt and pepper and bring the sauce to a simmer. Use your large spoon to make small wells in the sauce and crack the eggs into each well. Cover the pan and cook for 5-8 minutes, or until the eggs are done to your liking. Garnish.

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

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. Contact-Deb Conrad (978) 895-3505, Jeff & Sue Smith (978) 895-7887.

Appeal for Help for Maui
Long-time Royalston resident Ruth Suyenaga was born and raised in Hawaii. Although her family is safe, all of Hawaii is mourning the huge loss of life, homes and livelihoods caused by the recent wildfires. Because Lahaina is about the size of Athol and it has been mostly leveled, there is tremendous need for food and shelter there. If you are looking for a place to donate, she recommends the Maui Strong Fund of the Hawaii Community Foundation.