

THE ROYALSTON COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

February 2007



Volume X, Issue I

A Publication of the Friends of the Phineas S. Newton Library, Royalston, Massachusetts

Royalston Poet Laureate Competition

Poets, call your Muses. A local poet, of any age, who resides or works in Royalston now or ever, will be crowned the official Royalston Poet Laureate 2007. This title includes bragging rights, publication in this newsletter, a laurel wreath, and the choice of a book of poetry for the town library. The subject matter should be "Life in Royalston". Consider any aspect: seasons, people, natural beauty, government, taxes or anything else that strikes the poetic fancy. All forms of original, not-previously-published poetry are acceptable. Entries should be submitted by April 15 to the Friends of the Phineas S Newton Library, following the "contact us" information on the last page of this newsletter. Poets' names, addresses, phone #s, and their relationship to Royalston should be included on a *separate* sheet of paper please.

Calendar of Events

February 1 Thursday

6:30 pm **Friends of the Library Meeting.** The Friends are experimenting with an evening meeting time to see if it's more convenient for potential volunteers interested in helping with library work, upcoming programs, or this newsletter. Bring ideas.

February 2 Friday **Ground Hogs' Day**

report cards go home : ARRSD

12:45 a.m.

Full Snow Moon

7:00 pm

Open Mic at Town Hall

February 5 Monday

3:30 - 4:30 pm **Kids' Cross Culture Club explores Australia** with Caitlin Barclay. Free program includes marmite. At Phineas Newton Library. Call 249-3572 for info.

before 5 pm **deadline to turn in nomination papers** if running for a town position in the April election. See Town Clerk

7 p.m. **RFD Officers' meeting**

February 7 Wednesday

6:30 pm **RCS Parent Teacher Group meets**

7 p.m. **Monty Tech SchoolCom** meets

7:30 p.m. **Royalston Fish & Gun Club** meets (Directors at 7 p.m.)

February 9 Friday

6:30 pm **Cake Dance** at RCS

February 10 Saturday

10 a.m. - noon **Village School Open House**. Learn about school and its curriculum; free activities for children. 249-3505 for info.

February 12 Monday

3:30 - 4:30 pm **Kids' Cross Culture Club** at the Library explores **Senegal** with Fatou Sidibe. Free. 249-3572 for info.

February 12 Monday (continued)

6 p.m. **The Annual Singles' Valentines Potluck Dinner** will be held at the parsonage. Guitarist to follow. Call Rev. Asel: 249-9155



February 13 Tuesday

noon **Early dismissal RCS**

12:30 **Early Monty Tech Dismissal**

February 14 Wednesday **Valentine's Day**

February 15 Thursday

7 p.m. **"Savoring Heirloom Vegetables -Choosing, Planting and Saving Seeds for the Tops in Taste,"** at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main St., Athol. Presented by the North Quabbin Garden Club. Members free, nonmembers \$5. Info: gardens@millersriver.net.

February 17 Saturday

11:14 a.m.

New Worm Moon

February 19 Monday

Presidents' Day

government offices, library and post office closed

7 p.m. RFD EMS meeting at Sta. #1; Ice Rescue part 1 classroom

February 20 -23 **February Vacation** in local k-12 schools

10 am - noon **Painting classes** with Sonja Vaccari for grades 4 -up at Town Hall. Materials fee \$20. Pre-registration required. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

February 20 Tuesday

Mardi Gras "Fat Tuesday"

February 21 Wednesday

Ash Wednesday

February 23 Friday

7 pm **Eyes on Owls**, live owl presentation at the Town Hall. Free. Sponsored by the Phineas S Newton Library and funded by the Royalston Cultural Council. 249-3572 for info.

February 24 Saturday

8:00 a.m. **RFD EMS Meeting** Ice Rescue part 2

February 26 Monday

3:30 - 4:30 pm **Kids' Cross Culture Club** explores **Germany** with Frances Graziano. Free. Snacks_249-3572

March 3 Saturday

3:16 p.m. **Total Eclipse of the moon** begins; continues through 9:25 p.m.

RCS Poetry Club

I Am In Peace

I am in peace in this land
We all live in peace
Is it just me or is it peace?
Peace is in my land
Peace is in your land
Hannah Bartkus, Grade 1
January 18, 2007

March 5 _____ Monday

3:30-4:30 pm **Kids' Cross Culture Club explores Italy** at the library with Mary Carnie.

March 30 _____ Friday

TBA **Lasagne Supper and Fabulous Student Talent Show** at RCS. Get your acts together. Info: 249-2900

Board of Health News

New Trash Compactor: The trash compactor is now in operation. There were unforeseen delays in ordering and receiving an inverter for 3-phase power to the unit. The BOH would like to thank Travis Neale, who did all the electrical work, the Royalston DPW for its invaluable assistance in site prep and transport of the attendant hut, and Paul Dias from Bliss Hill Rd. for a good deal on the hut. The compactor should cut down on the amount of windblown trash at the site and allow for a more efficient operation.

In order to cut down on possible delays at the compactor, consider buying stickers ahead of time. Placing them on your bags before you arrive will quicken the exchange at the compactor. The attendant will be located at the unit, in order to facilitate sticker transactions. Trash bags must have the yellow trash stickers on them before placement in the unit.

Please, maintain a counter clockwise flow at the facility. You can access the compactor from either side. Once you have dumped into the unit, move out to let others gain access. Expect some traffic backup at peak operating times. Please be considerate of others and do not block traffic movement.

Recycling: Bottles and cans will no longer be required to be put in barrels in the recycling building. Deposit bottles and cans directly into the covered roll off container at the end of the building. The Boy Scouts have a bin on the left as you enter the building if you wish to donate returnables to them. Other containers accepted are: glass containers, plastics containers (#1 thru #7 - except Styrofoam containers), aluminum and metal containers, and milk and juice cartons and other non container items. Please rinse containers prior to bringing them for recycling. Please do not break the glass. Plastic and metal containers are encouraged to be crushed down if possible. Unacceptable containers are from: oil, antifreeze, and any chemical such as paint thinners etc. (if it is not safe to rinse into your septic, we do not want it for recycling). Also, no light bulbs, window glass, Pyrex, plant containers, pottery, or paint cans. If you have any questions concerning what can be put in the commingled roll off, please ask the attendant.

The BOH is in the process of requesting money for the installation of a set of scales. This will enable fair determination of the cost of disposing material into the demolition roll off. Again, the BOH is not trying to become a profit making operation. The intent is to recover the cost of doing business so that the tax rate is not impacted. We ask the voters for their support in this request.

It's Brush Burning Season - Burn Permits Necessary: Call the fire department 249-8138

Selectmens' Notes

Andy West, Chairperson

It is now budget season and the **Selectboard is collecting department budget requests** to distill into a budget worthy of Finance Committee review. Department heads and committees should submit budget information to the Board by February 5.

The Board will have a **Strategic Planning meeting** this month with department heads to coordinate goals. This will help all the different departments align goals and work together more efficiently.

The Selectmen are **taking applications for the Town Treasurer position until February 5**. Applications are available at the Selectmen's office.

Minutes from 2005 and 2006 Selectmen's meetings are now on the Royalston Website www.royalston-ma.gov.

Town Clerk News

Melanie Mangum, Town Clerk

Office hours: Whitney Hall

Mon - 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m./ Tue - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



2007 Dog Licenses are in: Time to get man's best friend a tag for 2007. 2006 licenses will expire on March 31, 2007. The fee is \$6.00 per spayed/neutered dog, \$10 per unaltered dog.

Annual Town Election Reminder: The deadline to return nomination papers with signatures for certification is fast approaching! They must be returned by Monday, February 12, no later than 5 p.m. There are currently several **open positions**; Thomas Kellner has announced that he will not run for re-election to another 3-year term on the Board of Selectmen. Donna Caissie is giving up her seat of the A-R School Committee. Bob Harris is not running for re-election to the planning board. Brenda Putney will not run for her terms on the J.N. Bartlett Fund and the Board of Public Welfare. Barbara Richardson is stepping down from the the J.N. Bartlett Fund. Other positions open: Assessor - 3 years, Cemetery Commissioner - 3 years, Board of Health - 3 years, Constable - 3 years, Sewer Commissioner - 3 years, and a total of 4 positions on the J.N. Bartlett Fund. If you are considering running for one of the open positions, hurry to get your papers and signatures.

So far, Mary Freden (Library Trustee - 3 years) and myself (Town Clerk - 3 years) have indicated by signing papers that we will run for re-election. Chet Hall has turned in papers to run for a term on the planning board and both Wayne Newton and Jon Hardie are pursuing the open seat on the selectboard.

Census: Annual Census forms are being mailed. This is a yearly process that results in the Annual Street Listing. Please remember, returning your signed census form is required by law - specifically, MGL Chapter 56, section 4. Chapter 51, section 4, states: "Failure to respond to this mailing shall result in removal from the active voting list and may result in removal from the voter registration rolls." There are about 150 voters currently on the inactive voters list. Some of these could be voters who have moved out of town. These voters will be removed after a period of inactivity for 2 state elections. Please return a corrected census form. Don't forget to sign it!

Vyto Andreliunas

We have enjoyed a quiet couple of months on the zoning bylaw review, during which we have been sorting out what appear to be substantive (weighty) questions from those of form and legalese. The former are those which need further reflection and debate, and the latter more investment of time. By next issue, we hope to publish a schedule for public actions needed, and also to have available for review the final work by our consultant. We continue to solicit your thoughts and ideas by e-mail, phone, or whatever. Visit www.royalston-ma.gov or contact Kim MacPhee at 978-249-0946, or Vyto Andreliunas at 978-249-7341

Royalston Police Department News

The RPD has had a busy New Year so far, investing the necessary time and effort to train five new officers. The Department recently welcomed **Matt Praplaski, Dan Wolski, Tom Sampson, Darren Senecal and Tim Fleck** to the force. They've been receiving instruction in police techniques, qualifying with firearms, learning about Royalston's radio communications and orienting themselves to the Town's 70 plus miles of roads, +/- 450 residences and 1,200 or so inhabitants. They join Chief Curtis A. Deveneau, Sergeant Wayne Gelinas, Sergeant Roland G. Hamel and K-9 Reba, DARE Officer Sherry A. Miner and K-9 Shawkin Awe, and Officers Herve J. Bosse, Scott Landry, Robert Plummer and Drew Duplessis.

Proposed Reorganization

of the Athol-Royalston School District

Tony Polito, Athol Royalston Regional School District Superintendent

ed note: Due to limited space, this is an abridged and squished version of the proposed reorganization plan. The full text is available by clicking the link at the library's web-site www.royalstonlibrary.org. It includes this information as well as proposed budgets and time lines. This plan is current as of 1/23/07, but is likely to change rapidly. There is a public hearing to discuss reorganization on Feb 1, 7 pm at the Athol-Royalston Middle School.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM: After a long period on probation at Athol High School, The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) voted in October to remove its accreditation. The primary reasons for this loss of accreditation are building issues that prevent students from achieving at their highest levels. The major concerns involve inadequate technology and science labs, a sub-standard library, poor conditions in the boys' locker room, and lack of space for nursing, guidance counselors and storage. There are other concerns about the temperature of the building, and some undocumented concerns about the air circulation.

The District has an opportunity to file a document to show cause as to why the accreditation loss should not become effective on July 1, 2007. This must be done by March 1, 2007. NEASC provided a template on what the District would have to do prevent the loss of accreditation. However at this time, the District and the Towns of Athol and Royalston are unable to provide NEASC with the assurances, financial support, game plan and/or timeline to satisfy NEASC. The District's plan to provide technology and an updating of the footprint of the library will not suffice.

Next school year, 2007-2008, the District will be down at least 350 students from its enrollment in the school year 2002-2003. The Royalston Community School is projected to be at about 1/2 capacity in the 2007-2008 school year. The District will pay out in FY07, to other school districts via deductions from its Chapter 70 aid from the State, about \$1.5 million. In FY08, \$2 million will have to be budgeted. As a result, the FY08 budget faces a shortfall of at least \$1.7 million from expected revenues, and the true number may be closer to \$2 million.

PROPOSED REORGANIZATION

1. Athol High School, Grades 9-12 will move from its present location and occupy the building currently occupied by A-R Middle School.
2. Athol-Royalston Middle school will relocate to Main Street in the present location of Athol High School.
3. The students in Grade 5 of the elementary schools in Athol will move to the relocated Middle School building on Main Street. Students in Grades 5 and 6 of the Royalston Community School will also be accepted into the relocated Middle School

4. Either the Sanders Street Elementary or the Silver Lake Elementary will be closed and the students redistricted to other schools. The remaining Athol elementary schools will service students in grades pre-K through 4 and the average class sizes will increase. Since the Royalston Community School would be far less than capacity, redistricting about 80-90 Athol students to Royalston would help alleviate the increase in class size in the Athol elementary schools. If Athol students cannot relocate to the Royalston Community School, staff must be drawn from that school. The resultant reorganization of the Royalston Community School would be:

5. A combined kindergarten (12 students) and first grade (12 students) class with one teacher; a combined second grade (13 students) and third grade (12 students) class with one teacher; a third grade and fourth grade class each with one teacher and a possible combined fifth and sixth grade with one teacher (if all students are not placed in the relocated middle school); one special education teacher and one teacher designated as a lead teacher instead of full-time or part-time principal.

6. All interscholastic athletic events at the high school level and large audience extracurricular events will continue to be held at the present high school.

7. All changes will become effective for the opening of the school year in September, with relocations taking place during the summer of 2007.

8. The District Central Office would relocate to the Ellen Bigelow School to free up additional space in the relocated high school.

RESULTS: Athol High School would remain accredited for one year and probably receive full accreditation in two years; the closing of an elementary school will save the District approximately \$1 million towards a projected revenue shortfall of \$1.7 million in FY08; the Towns and the District would be able to take the time to stabilize the finances and prepare a building plan to provide long-term solutions to its building problems; students and teachers in Grade 5 working in a Middle School building would receive greater supports to sustain their educational efforts and would be able to share resources such as text books.

NOTES: The Athol-Royalston Middle school does not need accreditation; the programmatic concerns of the present high school building, which hurt high school students in the preparation for work or college, do not affect the middle schoolers; there are no health and/or safety issues in the present high school building that will affect the middle school students; and the unequal heating and cooling of the building, the potable water and asbestos issues are being addressed presently.

Phinehas S. Newton Library News

Kathy Morris, Library Director

Trustees: Polly Longsworth, Lisa Freden, Barbara Guiney

Mondays: 10:00am - 8:30pm. Thursdays 1:00pm - 5:00pm and 6:30 - 8:30pm

Saturdays: 9:00am - 12:noon

979-249-3572 www.royalstonlibrary.org

Thank yous

Jim and Pat Kelley for donations of tons of craft materials for preschool story time crafts

Rolanda Brousseau, Kim MacPhee, Jennifer Robinson, Michael Finocchio, Lisa Freden, Ashley Sawyer, and Sonja Vaccari for donating books; **Ira Lippincott, Tom Musco, and Janet Bettey** for books-on-tape, **Mary Hoag** for a book and DVD, and **Irene Lawrence** for a DVD.

Raeann Leblanc for a magazine subscription.

Marquita Day for help while volunteering for ROTC Community Service, **Emma Finocchio** for help around the library and **Christine Sawyer** for help "weeding" and processing books for National Honor Society Community Service.

Recent Donations: *The library and the Friends truly appreciate the community's support.*

Donors to the Library:

Liane Brandon

Boyd Estus

The MacPhee Family

Don and Elvia Richards

Pierre and Marie-Claire Humblet

Theresa Quinn, George Krasowski, and family

Donors to the Friends:

Pierre and Marie-Claire Humblet **Don and Elvia Richards**

Cataloguing Update

Almost 2000 books have been entered into the MassCat database. Every new item since last July, all the adult and young adult fiction, young adult biographies, and one-third of children's picture books can now be accessed online by going to the library's website (www.royalstonlibrary.org) and clicking on the MassCat link or going directly to the website: www.masscat.org.

Nature Conquers Technology

Those using the wireless satellite internet connection at the library have experienced the interference storms and dense cloud cover can sometimes create, but on Sunday, January 14th, nature really showed who's boss. Gusty winds blew ice covered pine limbs down across the garden onto the arm of the satellite dish, which sent the library back to the realms of dial-up internet connections. Hopefully, the whole situation will be back on-line before you read this. It could have been much worse. The tree missed the roof and windows of the library by less than 3 feet and also spared the benches and most of the shrubs in the garden. As an aside, we also have at the library an enjoyable, easily readable, and lyrical book (which I happen to be reading) entitled, *The Tree: A Natural History of What Trees Are, How They Live, and Why They Matter* by Colin Tudge.

Eyes on Owls Program at the Town Hall

On Friday, February 23rd at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, dynamic naturalist Marcia Wilson and her photographer husband Mark Wilson will present a live owl program "*Who's Watching You? Owls of the World.*" The program begins with a slide show of Mark's photos. Marcia will introduce us to the calls of the more common owls found in our area with a hooting lesson. Audience hoots will bring responses from live owls. Marcia will bring out seven owls on her gloved hands as she walks among the audience. There will be plenty of time for close-up views, photos, and questions. Each owl has a permanent disability which prevents him or her from surviving on its own in the wilds. Mark and Marcia are legally permitted by state and federal agencies to utilize these owls in environmental educational programs. A copy of the book, *Arctic Wildlife*, with many of Mark's photos and other books on owls are available to borrow from the library. Join the fun and win a raffle prize! Eyes on Owls has donated an 18" x 24" fine art print of a Snowy Owl in flight to benefit the Friends of the Phinehas S. Newton Library. Tickets will be \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00. You need not be present to win and tickets may be purchased at the library or on the evening of the program. Sponsored by the Phinehas Newton Library and funded by the Royalston Cultural Council.

Kids' Cross Culture Club: Once again, the world is coming to the Royalston library this winter. Ages kindergarten through adult are welcome to learn about foods, climate, history, language, history, music and traditions of other cultures on Monday afternoons from 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. RCS students with written parental permission can arrange to take bus 302 directly from the school to the library. Every session includes a cross-cultural snack and participation is free. Pre-registration is helpful. Please call 249-3572 to register for one or more sessions. This year visit:

February 5 **Australia with Caitlin Barclay**, who recently spent two months in the land down under learning how to scuba dive and doing a walkabout. See her slides and hear her stories.

February 12 **Senegal with Fatou Sidibe**, a native of this West African country known for its fabulous clothing styles, spicy food and ubiquitous dance music. The Sidibe family run Good Morning Athol Café on Exchange Street in Athol, where it serves African stews and crepes along with the usual breakfast favorites.

February 26 **Germany with Frances Graziano**, a German native and local children's advocate. Did you know German was almost the official language of the USA? Come find out about this central European land famous for its history, composers and fairy tales.

March 5 **Italy with Mary Carnie**, 2nd grade teacher at RCS. Learn how to party like an Italian. Mrs. Carnie will teach Carnival traditions and share incredible Italian confections.

February Vacation Art Classes: Study painting with Mme V. (aka Sonja Vaccari) 10-noon at the Town Hall during the school February break. Open to 4th grade and up. A pre-paid \$20 fee covers materials for a new project every day Tuesday Feb 20th through Friday Feb. 23rd.. Space limited with preference given to Royalston residents. Pre-registration required. Call the library 249-3572 for info. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

Art Exhibit at Library: The paintings of the late John Burton are on display for another month at the library. John was a long-time resident of Royalston and member of the Royalston Cultural Council. He originated the Royalston Dinner Theater which became the Royalston Follies. Area residents have loaned us his works to showcase his talent. During the months of March and April, the multi-talented Doreen Sawyer will have a display of her beautiful quilts at the library.



New Books at the Library

Adult Fiction

Albom, Mitch *For One More Day*
 Atkinson, Kate *One Good Turn*
 Bell, Hilari *Forging the Sword: The Farsala Trilogy Book 3*
 Bradford, Barbara Taylor *The Ravenscar Dynasty*
 Brashares, Ann *Forever in Blue: The Fourth Summer of the Sisterhood*
 Bryant, Annie *Charlotte in Paris*
 Cabot, Meg *Missing You: 1-800-Where-R-You; Princess on the Brink; Size 14 Is Not Fat Either; and Valentine Princess*
 Cook, Thomas H. *The Cloud of Unknowing*
 Cooney, Caroline B. *A Friend At Midnight*
 Crichton, Michael *Next*
 Dean, Zoey *American Beauty: An A-List Novel*
 Evanovich, Janet *Plum Lovin'*
 Garwood, Julie *Shadow Dance*
 Goddard, Robert *Sight Unseen*
 Gregory, Philippa *The Boleyn Inheritance*
 Hoffman, Alice *Skylight Confession*
 Hunter, Erin *Moonrise; Sunset; and Twilight*
 Iles, Greg *True Evil*
 James, Eloisa *Pleasure for Pleasure*
 Johansen, Iris LT *Stalemate*
 Knox, Elizabeth *The Rainbow Opera*
 Lescroart, John *The Suspect*
 Levine, Gail Carson *Writing Magic: Creating Stories That Fly*
 Limb, Sue *Girl Going on 17, Pants on Fire*
 McCaffrey, Anne *Maelstrom*
 Mills, Mark *Amagansett*
 O'Connell, Carol *Find Me*
 Pierce, Tamora *Terror*
 Powers, Richard *The Echo Maker*
 Pratchett, Terry *Wintersmith*
 Rozan, S.J. *In The Rain*
 Ruckdesch, Liz *What if- All the Boys Wanted You; What if. . . Everyone Knew Your Name*
 Sansom, Ian *The Case of the Missing Books*
 Snicket, Lemony *The End*
 Stabenow, Dana *A Deeper Sleep*
 Steer, Dugald *The Dragon's Eye: Dragonology Chronicles Vol 1*
 Tadem, Lalita *Red River*
 Unger, Lisa *Sliver of Truth: A Novel*
 Westerfield, Scott *Specials; Uglies*
 Willig, Lauren *The Secret History of the Pink Carnation*
 Zusak, Markus *I Am the Messenger*

DVDs

<i>Bad Boys II</i>	<i>The Corpse Bride</i>
<i>How To Eat Fried Worms</i>	<i>Invincible</i>
<i>Lord of War</i>	
<i>Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby</i>	
<i>Dumb and Dumber Unrated : More Dumber Than Ever</i>	

Adult Nonfiction

Brant, Sharon *Finishing Techniques for Hand Knitters*
 Brown, Stephen *Birds of the Artic National Wildlife Refuge*
 Carter, Jimmy *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*
 Dawkins, Richard *The God Delusion*
 Eckman, Edie *The Crochet Answer Book*
 Hansen, Kaye *Christmas Cookies*
 Hurley, Dan *Natural Causes: Death, Lies and Politics in America's Vitamin and Herbal Supplement Industry*
 Lear, Linda *Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature*
 Marquez, Heron *George W. Bush*
 Obama, Barack *The Audacity of Hope*
 O'Rourke, P.J. *On the Wealth of Nations*
 Palmer, Thomas *Landscape with Reptile: Rattlesnakes in an Urban World*
 Pervical, Kris *Speed Knitting: 24 Quick and Easy Projects*
 Rapoport, Roger *Citizen Moore*
 Steinman, David *Safe Trip to Eden: Ten Steps to Save Planet Earth from the Global Warming Meltdown*
 Wagner, John D. *Barns, Sheds, and Outbuildings*
 Wheeler, Glen *Winchendon: Images of America*

Juvenile Nonfiction

Byrd, Robert *Leonardo, Beautiful Dreamer*
 Davies, Nicola *Extreme Animals*
 Davis, Kenneth C. *World Myths: Exploring the Unexplained: The World's Greatest Marvels, Mysteries and Myths*
 Girl's and Their Horses
 Gold, Rozanne *Kids Cook 1-2-3*
 Lagasse, Emeril *Emeril's There's a Chef in My World!: Recipes That Take You Places*
 Montgomery, Sy *Quest for the Tree Kangaroo*
 Phillips, Bob *Good Clean Jokes for Kids*
 Ray, Deborah Kogan *To Go Singing Through The World*
 Rayevsky, Kim & Robert *Antonyms, Synonyms, & Homonyms*
 Reynolds, Betty *Japanese Celebrations*
 Ripoll, Oriol *Play With Us: 100 Games from Around the World*
 Romei, Francesca *Leonardo da Vinci: Artist, Inventor, and Scientist of the Renaissance*
 Sateren, Shelley *Monet*
 Scarborough, Kate *Pablo Picasso*
 Sheldon, David *Barnum Brown Dinosaur Hunter*
 Trevor, Barnes *World Faiths: Christianity: Worship, Festivals, and Ceremonies From Around the World*
 Waters, Kate *Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan's Chinese New Year*
 Welton, Jude *Monet*

Adult Audio Books

Carter, Jimmy *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid*
 Petterson, James *Cross*
 Patterson, James *Judge & Jury*

Juvenile CD Book

Snicket, Lemony *The End*



What is the The Royalston Academy?

Maureen Blasco

The Royalston Academy is a group that funds scholarships and enrichment activities for Royalston youths, but it is no coincidence that it sounds more like a school than a benevolent organization. In the late 1960s, summer resident Katherine Bullock Cole purchased several houses on Royalston Common and worked to turn them into the campus of a private girls' academy. However, the difficulties getting the old buildings to conform to ever strengthening building codes eventually ended the idea. In the 1970s, when Mrs. Cole sold the buildings, the profits were used to fund the "Royalston Academy." Long time Royalston resident and educator, Maxine Wilcox, was involved with the Royalston Academy early on and became a conduit between the public elementary schools and the group. As a result, Royalston students have been able to benefit from many enrichment activities due to Academy support. For example, in the current school year, the academy funded a visit to the Royalston Community School from the Thayer Symphony and a month long residency with storyteller Diane Edgecomb. Current local board members, who administer the fund, include Alan and Theresa Bowers, Tom Musco, Patience Bundshuh, Kristin West and Maureen Blasco. In the late 1990s, the scholarship fund was expanded due to the efforts of Tom Musco, who established the Judy Jenkins Musco Scholarship for students who would like to pursue non-traditional educational opportunities. Though the Royalston Academy continues funding scholarships and educational activities with its original seed money, donations are gratefully accepted. Donations can be sent to : Royalston Academy/ PO Box 130/ Royalston MA 01368.

Recipe of the Month:



Theresa Bowers, long time treasurer of the Royalston Academy and former Town tax collector, offers this entre to warm you through the brightening days of February.

Pork Tenderloin a l'asparagus

Prep Time: 30 minutes Yield: 4 Servings

Cooking: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 (2-pound) pork tenderloin, cut into 8 pieces
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 (3-ounce) can sliced mushrooms, drained
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 (10 1/2-ounce) can cream of asparagus soup, undiluted
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
- Dash of pepper
- 1/4 cup milk

Steps: Pound pork pieces to flatten. In large skillet, melt butter and brown meat well. Remove meat. In same skillet, heat soup and milk together, stir in remaining ingredients. Return meat to skillet; cover and simmer slowly for 45 minutes or until fork tender. Serve meat with sauce.

Memorials

Eliina Karjalainen, 102, formerly of 4 Richmond Ct. South Royalston, died Tuesday December 5, 2006. She was buried at Riverside Cemetery. For many years, she had been Royalston's oldest resident. She was born in Viipuri, Finland, the daughter of Edward and Eva Karjalainen. She traveled to the United States by ship, landing on Ellis Island, NY on February 14, 1921. Her sponsors were her aunt and uncle, the late Mandi (Karjalainen) and Gustov Nordfors. She worked for 30 years as a cook and maid for the Nelson and Hoenig families of Worcester. She retired in 1967. She was a member of the 2nd Congregational Church of South Royalston, as well as the Templeton Golden Age Club and the Royalston Luncheon Club. She enjoyed going to Foxwoods Casino, knitting, crocheting, and playing cards. She leaves a sister, Aili Karjalainen, of Finland; two nephews, Bruce Alger and Mark Karjalainen of South Royalston; four nieces, Susan White of Hyannis, Debra Vescovi of Athol, Liisa Alger of Worcester and Linda Alger of South Royalston; as well as nieces, nephews, grand-nieces and grand-nephews and several great-grand-nieces and great-grand-nephews. Memorial donations may be sent to the Baldwinville Nursing Home Residents Activities Fund, PO Box 24 Baldwinville Ma 01436 or the 2nd Congregational Church, PO Box 76, South Royalston Ma 01374.

Pauline Alger, 95, of 2 Baldwinville Rd., died unexpectedly Friday, December 15, 2006. She was born in Fitchburg on May 8, 1911 to Arthur and Diana Lorison and had lived in South Royalston for 63 years. Mrs. Alger was an assembler for the ND Cass Toy Co. in Athol before her retirement in 1982. She attended the 2nd Congregational Church and enjoyed reading and crocheting. She formerly volunteered in a chorus, which sang to entertain disabled veterans' groups. She was a member of the Royalston Grange 195 and the Franklin and Worcester Pomona Grange #44. Sincere condolences to Arthur Alger, who was a primary companion and caretaker of his mother for many years.

Robert Peterson, 82, died surrounded by family on Friday, January 5, 2007. He was born in Royalston on April 20, 1924 and grew up here. His parents were Herbert and Hildur (Benson) Peterson. For many years, he and his father ran the former Peterson Dairy Farm, located just south of the Common. He also worked at the Bank of New England for 25 years. He was a member of the Bethany Lutheran Church in Orange as well as the Athol Kiwanas Club and Masons' Lodge. He worked to make his community a better place and often wrote letters to the editor of the Athol Daily News. He enjoyed traveling, piloting small planes, watching the Red Sox, and maintaining a small orchard. His wife of 47 years, Barbro Peterson, died in 2001. He leaves a daughter, Kristina Peterson, and a son, Bruce Peterson, both of Athol; a brother, David Peterson and his wife Charlene of Athol; a sister, Joann Prozzo of Sarasota, FL; and several grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Memorial donations may be sent to Bethany Lutheran Church, 62 Cheney St, Orange, MA 01364.



CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD NEWS

Got something to crow about? Send it along to the RCN. Zap to chasegos@gis.net or drop at library.

Sharon A. Harmon of Royalston just sold a gardening article to Greenprints Magazine.

Jeffery on a roll: **Brett Jeffery**, of 172 NE Fitzwilliam Rd, is making the most of his senior year at AHS. Starting on both the offensive and defensive line, he helped the AHS football team to an 8-2 record. Post-season, he was named as a starting lineman for the league all-star team. Jumping into wrestling season, Brett placed 1st at the Longmeadow Early Bird and Great Barrington Holiday Tournaments. Wrestling in the 215 pound class for AHS, Brett is currently 12-0 and looking forward to the upcoming UMASS championships. Upon graduating this spring, Brett plans to continue his education, perhaps at Westfield State College.

Congratulations to Royalston PD Sergeant **Roland G. Hamel and RPD K-9 Reba**, who earned the highest level certification for air-scent searching. The pair recently completed their 160 acre wilderness search with a timed "find." Prior to that, they had to certify in trail search, 40 acre day search and 40 acre night search. Roland and Reba have been training together for two and a half years, since Reba was eight weeks old, and are members of MASK-9, the volunteer search and rescue group Massachusetts Air Scent K-9s.

Congratulations to the eight Royalston high schoolers who earned a spot on Monty Tech's honor roll for the fall semester. Receiving honors were **Ryan Gaudet, Ashley Gladden, Hannah Kacian, and Amber McCassie**. High honors went to **Michael Demboske, Andrew Parnanen, Megan Wessels, and Corey Wheeler**.

Paul Tortorella, Andover Academy faculty and resident of White Heather on the Common has just published a book of original poetry, *The Common Poems*. A goodly portion of these accessible poems relate directly to Royalston. With bittersweet insight and wry humor, Tortorella uses local images like dying maples, stone walls, wooden folding chairs, walking the old dog, Federal style houses and even Warren Preville to express an uneasy connection-between his private and public life. Several of the poems poke fun at the pitfalls of maintaining an old house. The book is available for purchase at the Royalston Post Office.



The Board of Selectmen recently presented Lillie Dobson with an Award of Appreciation for her thirty years of service to the Town as a Registrar of Voters. With Ms. Dobson are Selectmen Andrew West and Linda Alger.

Welcome to Dakota Kenneth Fitzpatrick, born October 31, 2006 to **Chris and Christina Fitzpatrick**. Dakota weighed 9 lbs and measured 21 " long. He joins a brother, **Andrew Paul Fitzpatrick**, 19 months.



Royalston's own singer/songwriter, **Diane Lincoln** (alias Linq), has just been notified that she has received Honorable Mention in the 2006 International Narrative Song Competition (INSC) for her song, "Tired", in the "Other Human Relationships" Category. The contest is based in Ontario, Canada; complete results can be seen at www.narrativemusic.ca. She has also completed her first music video, which will be included as part of a 2-song enhanced CD called CHANGE THE PICTURE, GEORGE! Both tracks, "Change the Picture" and "George Orwell Where Are You", have been heard at the Royalston Open Mic. This new project is due to be released late February/early March.

Senior Luncheon Great Fun

Marie-Claire Humblet

The Royalston Council on Aging is delighted to report an impressive 55 residents received flu immunizations on November 29, and on December 27, the Council on Aging and the Cultural Council joined forces to celebrate the New Year. At the party, fine desserts backed up the luncheon fare. The Cultural Council sponsored the performance of Dorothy Hayden, the poet and entertainer extraordinaire. She made us laugh with her humorous pieces, made us proud with poems celebrating our town, and won over all of attending with her energy and optimism. A worker in a nearby room dropped by after hearing the excitement. He looked at our champagne glasses with an understanding look, and yet he was totally wrong; those glasses had only contained clear soda!! The men received strawberries, the women went home with roses. It was so much fun, we should do it again. COA president Betty Woodbury has extended a special invitation to anyone who wishes to enjoy a hot meal in a cozy hall with plenty of healthy friends this winter. The group is in the planning stages for a luncheon trip to the Monty Tech Mountain Room Restaurant - Reserve your seat for the weekly luncheon the Monday before the Wednesday meals, or add your name to the Monty Tech trip list at 978-249-9656.



Dorothy Hayden (left) just before the start of her show at the New Years Luncheon as Betty Woodbury (right) of the Council of Aging kindly shares news from friends who are sick or unable to attend.

Monty Tech ...

In Drag: It will be "A Night to Remember," at Monty Tech's Performing Arts Center on Saturday, February 10, 8 pm, as the TSO presents the multifaceted Randy Roberts, female impersonator. This all-live, multi-media show pays tribute to Joan Rivers, Cher, Mae West, Joan Crawford, Carol Channing, and other originals. He is equally at ease with a song, dance or joke. Call Debbi Brown at 978-466-1800 X 11 for tickets or buy tickets after 7 p.m. at the box office the night of the concert.

In the Spotlight: "Totally Monty Tech!," a video production by Monty Tech students about happenings at that school, has been released and is now available to anyone who is interested. The DVD was produced January 3, 2007, and features many shops and some of Royalston's 27 Monty Tech students! A copy of the DVD will be available at the Phinehas Newton Library.

In the Admissions Office: Royalston, again, has been very fortunate to garner more than the three guaranteed seats in the freshman class. Thus far, the class of 2011 has six Royalston freshmen; three students remain on the waiting list. A lengthy and extremely critical review of the application process has just been completed by the school committee to ensure that a wide academic range of students is eligible for admittance. Students are accepted based on their incoming scores, which incorporates attendance and behavior during middle school, passing eighth grade math and English, and academic other achievement. Two or three students apply for every seat in the freshman class.

In Night School: Classes for Monty Tech Nites after hours education program begin February 5. For a complete listing, check the website www.montytech.net.

This day in history:

February 3

1787 **Shay's Rebellion ends in Petersham.** *The next time you drive the Daniel Shays Hwy, Rt 202 to Belchertown, consider this:* After the Revolutionary War, Massachusetts levied high taxes to help pay its war debt. Farmers in Central and Western Massachusetts were primarily using a barter economy and the need to pay big taxes in cash was forcing them to sell their land to Boston fat cats at fire sale prices or even go to debtors prison. In response, a group of hundreds of farmers, artisans, and rural leaders, loosely led by Daniel Shays, called Shaysites or "Regulators", took up arms to march on the courts, free debtors from prisons and attempt to seize the federal arsenal in Springfield. Because Massachusetts was broke and because of widespread empathy for the rebel's cause, the state government would not fund a militia to put down the rebels. Eventually, private funds from bankers hired the 4400 mercenaries who put down Shay's Rebellion by chasing the Shaysites through 4 feet of snow from Springfield Arsenal to Petersham.

The successes of the Shaysites gave pause to the Founding Fathers, who began to see a need to have a stronger central government, capable of raising and funding its own standing militias, just in case another such ornery rabble needed quelling. Shay's Rebellion was influential in ending the period of strong States' Rights under the Articles of Confederation and bolstering support in the Continental Congress for spelling out our current system of a powerful federal government in the US Constitution.

Congregational Churches News

Rev. Ginger Asel

Valentine's Day falls right in the middle of the month of February. Red hearts decorate public areas early on to remind us that this is a time to celebrate love and friendship. The Congregational churches in Royalston continue their traditions:

February 12th - 6 p.m. **The Annual Singles' Valentine's Potluck Dinner** will be held at the parsonage (3 on the Common). Mary McMilleon from Winchendon will provide an evening of music following the dinner. She is a talented guitarist, soloist and composer. Mary's exuberant personality will shine through her music and her words. All singles are invited; call 978-249-9155 for information. February 14th - 3 -4 p.m. This year **Bible Club falls on Valentine's Day**. Nancy Wilson will be the guest presenter. All the children will remember Nancy from this past summer when she and her husband Kent conducted the Vacation Bible School.

Village School Open House February 10

The Village School is holding an Open House on Saturday, February 10 from 10:00 to noon. This is an opportunity to see classrooms, meet teachers, talk to current parents and students, and learn about curriculum. From 10 to 11:30 a.m. there will be arts and crafts projects and science activities for children in all the classrooms. At 11:30 a.m. everyone will gather together to meet with school director Risa Richardson. Refreshments will be served. Snow date is Sunday February 11 from 2-4.

Royalston Real Estate Report

Provided by Four Columns Realty

ed note: a community newsletter thrives on community submissions. This column was suggested and written by new resident, Les Black. Let the RCN know what you think.

Recent Sales

Address: 10 Butterworth Road

Description: 3 bedroom home on 7.3 acres of land

Sale Price: \$262,500

Sale Date: 1/17/2007

Address: 29 North Fitzwilliam Road

Description: 3 bedroom home on 3.6 acres of land

Sale Price: \$205,000

Sale Date: 1/9/2007

Recent Listings

Address: 38 Pleasant Street

Description: 3 Bedroom Home on 0.36 Acres of Land

List Price: \$249,900

List Date: 1/19/2007

Address: 2 The Common

Description: 4 bedroom home on half acre of land

List Price: \$214,900

List Date: 1/10/2007

Address: Athol-Richmond Road

Description: 3 bedroom home to be built on 4.6 acres

List Price: \$249,900

List Date: 1/4/2007

Address: Athol-Richmond Road

Description: 4.6 Acres of Land

List Price: \$65,000

List Date: 1/4/2007

Notes: 34 single-family homes have sold in Royalston since the start of 2005. The average sale price was \$220,444.

The Royalston Real Estate Report is based on information supplied to and compiled by the MLS Property Information Network, Inc. For corrections or more information, please call Les Black at (978) 544-5100.

Open Mic at the Royalston Town Hall Friday, February 2 at 7pm

The event is back on everyone's calendar. An enthusiastic public has shown again how much it loves to see new talent; it has a soft spot for those who dare to try because if they return, they will simply get better and better. Last month, we had the first performance of Fran Doughty, who promised to come back. Of course, it is as much fun to welcome experienced performers to Royalston: some play regularly, others surprise us with courtesy visits that both inspire and delight. This is a free event sponsored by the Royalston Cultural Council, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Baked goods and beverages, all at \$1, available. Donations of baked goods welcome.

Local Motorcycle Safety Courses - Scholarships

Four full scholarships for the Motorcycle Safety Foundation have been announced by our local chapter of the Red Knights Motorcycle Club. Comprised of firefighters, their families and guests, the group is dedicated to safe riding, and in cooperation with the Central Mass. Chapter of the Safety Council in West Boylston, offers two "beginner" and two "experienced" rider education scholarships. Motorcycles are provided for the beginner course; successful students will receive their MC license (if needed) and enjoy a ten percent reduction in motorcycle insurance rates. Beginner scholarships are open to anyone eligible to earn a license, regardless of age or prior driving experience. Those under 18 must have parental consent. Preference is given to RKMC members for experienced rider scholarships. Scholarship applications are available from members Jim Barclay or Caitlin Barclay, or at www.rk-mass2.org

Royalston Fish & Game Club News

Superbowl Sunday – Feb. 4 - plans are in place, and all are welcome to buy one last \$10 ticket for the **42" HD Plasma TV Superbowl Raffle**. Hurry and reserve a seat for the Club's famous **Roast Beef Supper**, on Feb. 10 before they're gone! If you're a card player, you might find a spare seat or two at the weekly Pitch games at 7 p.m. on Tuesdays, or for the One Day Pitch Tournament at 2 p.m. on Feb. 25. Warm up this February at the F&G. Grab a bevy, watch TV, play pool or cards or darts. Additional information, supper and Superbowl raffle tickets by calling 978-249-3004.



Bar manager Ginny Gingras
sells tickets

The F&G is hosting a **HUNTER SAFETY EDUCATION COURSE**, which meets requirements for the State's permission to apply for a License to Carry (LTC) Firearms or Firearms Identification Card (FID). The course takes place at the Royalston F&G Wed. Mar. 7 from 6:30 – 9:30 p.m., and two Sundays, Mar. 25 and Apr. 1, from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.; 100 percent attendance is required for completion. The course supplies information on safe handling and storage of hunting arms and ammunition, hunting laws and ethics, wildlife identification, wildlife management, care and handling of game, basic survival skills and first aid. Successful students earn a graduate patch and certificate of completion. Pre-registration is mandatory. Thanks to volunteers, these classes are free of charge, but they fill quickly. Call 978-632-7648 to reserve a seat.

Garden Club Samples Heirloom Vegetables

Join Lula Field of Warwick in "Savoring Heirloom Vegetables – Choosing, Planting and Saving Seeds for the Tops in Taste." Field will demonstrate how to choose tomato, bean, squash, and other vegetable seeds; how to plant those seeds; and then how to collect and store seeds from your own vegetables. Presented by the North Quabbin Garden Club on Thursday, February 15, at 7 p.m. at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main St., Athol, the program is free to members; others are asked for a \$5 donation. For more information write to gardens@millersriver.net.

Updated Athol Memorial Hospital Support Groups

The following support groups are **free** and meet at the hospital in the first floor conference room unless otherwise indicated. For more information, call Community Relations at (978) 249-3511 x143.

□ indicates a change of day, time, or new information

□ **ACOA AlAnon** For adults raised by alcoholic caretakers/parents. Meets every Saturday at 10 a.m.

AlAnon for family and friends of people with alcohol related issues. Meets EVERY MONDAY at 7 p.m.

ALS Support Group for people seeking help in coping with their illness. Led by Linda D'Amour-Duffy, MSW, LCSW and Sandy King, RN, BSN. Meets the LAST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH at 6:30 p.m.

Bereavement Support Group for people seeking a compassionate environment to help cope with the death of a loved one. Led by Kate Hart, LICSW. Meets from 1 - 2:30 p.m. on the THIRD TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH.

□ **Cancer Support Group** Meets the FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH at 4:30 p.m. Facilitated by the AMH Oncology Clinic's Bonnie Frank Hume, LICSW.

Diabetes Education & Support Group offers practical information and caring, emotional support. Led by Marjorie Sobil, RD, LDN. Meets 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. on the THIRD TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH from September to June.

Healthy Hearts and Lungs Club for anyone with cardiac or lung disease or at risk for developing the diseases. Learn to manage risk factors and create a healthy lifestyle. Meets from 2-3 p.m. on THE THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH. Facilitated by Joyce Sawyer, BSN.

HIV/AIDS Social and Support Group for anyone with AIDS or HIV-positive. For date, time and place please call 249-3511 Ext. 283.

□ **SMART Recovery** is a cognitive/rational approach to overcoming addictive behavior and maintaining abstinence. Learn to manage your feelings and combat the urge to use drugs and/or alcohol. MEETS the FIRST and THIRD SATURDAY at 10:00 a.m. in the Cardiac Rehab Education Room on the first floor.

Smoking Cessation facilitated by Tim Sweeney, Tobacco Treatment Specialist. MEETS EVERY MONDAY from 6-7 p.m.

Garden Notes

Larry Siegel

It was no less an authority than Bob Dylan who advised, "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows." The south; it's been blowing from the south, bringing the warmest December on record and two weeks in January that were hardly cooler. I was gardening (serious gardening, not the pick-up-the-stray-tool or pull-the-errant-vine variety), but turning beds and weeding perennials at the end of December and would have continued into January had the ground not become so wretchedly wet.

Winter arrived with the ice storm on the 15th of January and temperatures plummeted. Think of it as our January Freeze, a respite from our thawed winter. Ice, of course, is not uncommon though I do not recollect when it persisted quite so long. Now, one week after the event, the trees remain encased in ice, and the young birches and pines bent to the ground. Depending on your frame of mind, it provides a sense of wonderment at winter's beauty or a sense of distress for the amount of work required to deal with the fallen twigs, branches and trees.

Not everything responded well to the unseasonable season. I mulch the garlic and strawberry beds after hard frost sets in; that generally occurs after three consecutive days with temperatures not exceeding the mid-20s. Before that occurred, the garlic had already sprouted. (It had never done so before.) I trust, like the grass with which it is related, it will die back and re-emerge in spring. If not, I can look forward to a garlic-deprived year.

In Your Own Back Yard

Beth Gospodarek

With the leaves down and the snow paltry, stone walls stand out on our roadsides, in our woods and bordering some backyards. Icons of the region, stone walls are the result of both the natural history and human history in New England.

Back in the geological day, about 4 billion years ago, land masses floating on tectonic plates began to converge, bulldozing any ocean sediment, reefs, volcanic islands and other muck that got in the way while they formed the supercontinent "Pangea." About 300 million years ago, the violent collision of the land masses caused major tectonic havoc, resulting in a huge mountain range thrusting up. These mountains, the remnants of which became the Appalachians, were too heavy for the Earth's crust to support, and they sunk 20 miles deep toward the Earth's mantle, causing more geological stress: fissures, violent heat, and upheaval of molten rock. A lot of the mud and sediment scooped up from the ocean floor as the continents were moving, morphed into hard granite and gneiss of our backyards. About 200 million years ago, Pangea broke into roughly the continents on a modern map. The North American tectonic plate floated away with its share of rocks. Time passed. Temperate forests and grasslands supported many kinds of life including dinosaurs, rhinoceros, humans and the like. By about 7 million years ago, climate change presaging the "Ice Age" was noticeable. By 21,000 years ago, the Laurentide Ice Sheet was two miles thick and 4000 miles in diameter. Like an invisible hand pushing down on a sideless box of sugar cubes, the glaciers weight pressured rocks to scatter out of the bedrock. Massachusetts was on the southern end of the glaciers reach. When the ice melted, the rocks were left behind.

While the story of the stone is very old, the story of the walls is relatively new. Surprisingly, Native Americans and even early European colonists in New England did not find particularly rocky soils. Millions of years of composted forest, wetland and grassland debris

Some of the stash in the root cellar responded less than well to the warm temperatures. There was a time when a root cellar ran from the basement of our house to the road, a distance of 30 or so feet. I have been told that the passageway used to be filled with potatoes; and customers were able to cart off their purchases from the roadside. When it collapsed, it was closed off at each end, but the closure in our basement left eight feet of tunnel. It's here our vegetables are stored. Ideal conditions are temperatures just above freezing and lots of humidity. There is no problem with the latter since water is consistently dripping in from the earth above. Temperatures in the root cellar usually hover around 40 degrees, cool enough, but this year, the hovering point has been closer to 50. The carrots have sprouted and the cabbage require routine maintenance in the form of peeling off the degraded outer leaves. Remarkably, everything else has shrugged off the warmer conditions, remaining firm and (sort of) fresh.

Gardening? Well, there are the indoor houseplants to water, tend and pamper and the basement is littered with hundreds of tulip, hyacinth, crocus, and alliums being forced into spring color. (Hundreds more were set outdoors, taking advantage of December's balm and Agway's 75% off sale.) None of this indoor gardening, I confess, is actually my doing. I've set aside gardening for the moment, content with admiring the glossy photographs in the seed catalogues and wondering how I can duplicate them.

had left a thick humus layer over the stones. It was only after the Revolutionary War, when settlers moved away from the coast and rivers and began to clear cut forests to make way for inland farms, that stones emerged. For the first years, the soil was very productive and not rocky, but without the temperature-mitigating effects of the forest and its fallen leaves, the bared soils got much colder in winter. Frost went deeper and the freezing-thawing cycles began to heave up the stones the glaciers had left behind tens of thousands of years before. Heaps and heaps of stones kept on surfacing with the seasons in the early decades of 19th Century. Eventually, the rate of emergence steadied to the seasonal trickle Royalston gardeners know today. Farming families had to put these rocks somewhere, and so, the stones were tossed to the boundaries of fields in rough walls; over generations, the walls were often neatened up out of pride, surplus labor or nostalgia.

New England stone walls are usually waist height. That is because around 3 feet is the highest humans can efficiently and repetitively lift heavy objects. Many stone walls enclose areas of around 2 acres because this is the size that is efficient when considering the time and energy required to transport stone to the edge of the field and return for more. This unchangeable small field size, set in stone, influenced farmers from small upland towns like Royalston to go west after the Civil War. New, mechanized methods of farming worked much more efficiently in the big fields on the prairies. When the farmers left, the trees grew up, and most stone walls in our town now divide woods.

Scenic and historic, alive with creatures and colored with moss and minerals, stone walls are a local treasure; considering the lives of the families that piled the stone and knowing that the walls are bound to eventually tumble with time is haunting, humbling and somehow comforting. *Further Reading: Two good field guides about local stone walls, both by Robert Thorston, a geologist at the University of Connecticut, are available at the Phinehas Newton Library*

Thanks to the team at Fieldstone Press for donating the printing of the Royalston Community Newsletter

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Mrs. Mary C. Barclay
School Committee/ Royalston Rep.

Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School
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www.montytech.net

Open House



10 a.m.-12 p.m.
Saturday, February 10th
Arts & crafts, science and
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Snow Date: Sun., Feb 11th
2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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For Sale: Frigidaire Chest Freezer, 5 cubic foot capacity, four years old. \$100 or best offer. Call Aaron @ 249-6771

30 gal. Electric hot water tank and one expand water tank - \$95 firm. Used 6 months in cabin. Excellent condition. 249-8431.

Services Available:

Housecleaning – Done in your home – 4 hr for \$60.00. Royalston resident. Please call Fran:978-249-8431 or cell phone 978-895-0817.

As time allows, Randy Divoll is accepting farm, garden and other mechanical equipment repair jobs. Call 249-9239 or 978-259-3160.

Wildlife Sightings

On New Year's Day 2007, a **spotted salamander and a road kill frog**, both seen by Carl Kamp and Alyce Mayo on Warwick Road, were some of nature's responses to the recent unseasonable temps.

Dean Boudreau, Jake Landry, Ryan Ledger, and Tim Griffith were hunting on December 20th and were on their way to the next stand when they saw a **bobcat** up on the hill looking down in the Barclay's field at the corner of Northeast Fitzwilliam Road and Frye Hill Road.

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

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Submission deadline for March issue is: February 22

To submit news, articles, ads, calendar notices, classifieds:

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In person: Drop off at library

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