

THE ROYALSTON COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

April 2008



Volume XI, Issue III

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

Calendar of Events

April 1 Tuesday **All Fools' Day!**
7 p.m. **Selectmen meet** at Town Hall

April 2 Wednesday
7 p.m. **Monty Tech School Com meets**

April 3 Thursday
3:30 pm **Friends of the Library meeting** - help needed!
7:30 p.m. **Heritage Landscape Inventory** discussion at Town Hall. All encouraged to attend and add input.

April 4 Friday
7 p.m. **Open Mic Season Finale** at the Town Hall

April 5 Saturday
11:55 p.m. **New Pink Moon**

April 6 Sunday
10 am - 3 pm **"North Quabbin Outdoor Experience"** at the Athol/Orange Elk's lodge on Rt 2A in Orange, a showcase of outdoor leisure activities in the North Quabbin region. No admission fee ; free seminars all day. Benefits the Mahar Fish & Game Club, believed to be the oldest high school fish & game club in the Commonwealth.

April 7 Monday
10 a.m. - 8 p.m. **Annual Town Elections** at Town Hall (Precinct 1) and Whitney Hall (Precinct 2)
7 pm **Library Trustee Meeting** at library on the Common

April 9 Wednesdaynoon - 4:00 p.m. **Kindergarten Registration** at the Royalston Community School for any child that will be 5 years of age by September 1, 2008. Call 978-249-2900 for more info.

April 12 Saturday River Rat Day in Athol
8:45 am **Geology field trip** to Chet and Sheila Hall's beryl mine led by Bob Coyle with the Athol Bird and Nature Club. Meet at the Royalston Town Hall at 8:45. Bring rock hammer, safety glasses, magnifying glasses and bags for collecting.

April 13 - 19 **50th Anniversary of National Library Week**
Features library memorabilia from the last 50 years and prizes.

April 18 Friday
2-4 p.m. and 7-8 p.m. **Final day to register to vote in the Annual Town Meeting** with Town Clerk Melanie Mangum at Whitney Hall.

close of school- April 27 **April Vacation** for local schools

April 19 Saturday **Patriot's Day**
Passover begins at sundown
9:30 am **Hike to Royalston Falls** for persons in recovery & friends. (Rain date 4/20) with MREC. Meet at Tully Dam on Route 32 in Royalston. For more details call Dan Bolton 978-249-2162.

April 20 Sunday
6:25 a.m. **Full Pink Moon**

April 21 Monday **Nabonassar New Year 2757**
Patriots Day Observed - Post Office, Library, Town Offices closed

April 22 Tuesday **Earth Day**
The Lyrid Meteor Shower is visible in the southern skies during this morning's predawn hours. Associated with the Thatcher Comet, this shower should produce about a dozen visible "shooting stars" per hour at its peak.

April 24 Thursday
2:30 pm **Kite Flying Day** at the library featuring free kites, kite cake, and opportunities to write spring poetry. Dress for wet feet and hope for wind.

April 25 Friday
National Arbor Day



April 26 Saturday
9 am - noon **Returnable**
Bottle and Can Drive; please drop clean items at the Center Fire Station. Benefits the Royalston Community School library.

9 am - noon **Annual Town-Wide Roadside Clean-up**. Pick up litter along our roads; dispose of it for free at dump. Cookout following for all participants at noon at Bullock Park; info: Charlie Scribner 978- 249-2807.

April 27 Sunday
8 a.m. **Winchendon Rod & Gun Kid's Fishing Derby**. Fishing begins at 9, rain or shine.

May 1 Thursday **May Day**
Surprise someone with a May Basket
9 am **Maypole Weaving and Morris Dancers** at the Village School. All welcome.

May 9 Friday
7 p.m. **Annual Town Meeting** at the Royalston Community School

7 pm **Father*-Daughter Dance** at Athol Town Hall to benefit A-REF, a group that funds enrichment projects in the local public schools.

News from the Open Space Committee

Community Preservation Act to be Considered at Town Meeting

Combining locally raised funds with a state match to preserve historic properties, protect open space, provide affordable housing, and develop new outdoor recreational facilities – that’s the essence of the Community Preservation Act (CPA).

How much would it cost? The local funds come from a 1-3% surcharge on property taxes; the proposal at Town Meeting also exempts low-income residents, low- and moderate-income senior citizens, and the first \$100,000 of residential property value from the surcharge. The cost to the average resident in town? Only \$28 per year, or 54¢ per week, less than the cost of one cup of coffee. How much would we raise? Based on 2007 assessments, the CPA would raise at least \$17,000 locally; in 2008, the state match is expected to be between 60 and 70% (\$10,000 - \$12,000).

Who decides how to spend the CPA funds? A CPA committee of 9 town residents, to be appointed by the Selectboard or elected at annual elections, makes recommendations to Town Meeting. All final decisions about spending CPA funds are made by voters at Annual Town Meeting. Any funds not spent each year can be saved for another year.

How do we vote to adopt the CPA? Adopting the CPA takes two votes one at Annual Town Meeting on May 9, and by ballot during the fall (national) election on November 4. To adopt the CPA, it needs to pass both of these votes by a simple majority. At the Annual Town Meeting we will also vote on a by-law to establish a CPA Committee so that we can begin right away to plan how we can use the CPA in Royalston.

To learn more about the CPA

- Visit the Open Space Committee’s website, accessible from the town website (www.royalston-ma.gov)
- Send us an e-mail at info@royalstonopenspace.org.
- Call committee chair Aaron Ellison at 249-6771 or clerk Christine Beckert Long at 249-0246.

Board of Health News

Phil Leger, chair

By press time, there should be a new transfer station attendant in place. Say hi and give him time to get up to speed with the job. BOH members Chet Hall and Phil Leger filled in during the transition period. You will notice that the recycling building is more organized and finally the bottles and cans are caught up from the winter.

A reminder about bag stickers. Stickers are \$2.00 per 33 gallon size bag or barrel. Some people are buying the largest bag available and putting one sticker on them. If it’s twice the size of a 33 gallon size bag, then 2 stickers are due. The same goes for the small white half size trash bags. These are half sticker bags, not a third of a sticker size. Please take note and put the appropriate number of stickers on the bag. If your bag is too big, maybe it’s time to recycle more. It’s easy and it’s free.

Annual Town Election

Monday, April 7, 2008

Polls will be open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Precinct 1 is located at Town Hall, 13 The Common. Precinct 2 is located at Whitney Hall, 5 School St.

There is only one contest on the Royalston side of the Annual Election ballot. Gary L. Winitzer is challenging incumbent Andrew J. West for a three-year seat on the Board of Selectmen. The only other contests on the ballot are for a total of three Athol seats on the Athol-Royalston Regional School Committee. Athol residents Karen M. McNiff, the incumbent, Ranee D. LaPointe and Wayne A. Whitfield are vying for two, three –year Athol seats on the committee. William J. Caldwell and Keith P. Truehart, both of Athol, are vying for one, one-year Athol seat on the school committee.

There are 3 seats completely open. No one took out papers for the following: A three-year term as Cemetery Commissioner, a three-year term on the Board of Public Welfare, and a one-year term as Tree Warden.

The following are the remaining positions/candidates on the ballot:

Assessor – 3 years – James M. Richardson
Board of Health – 3 years – Phil Leger
Board of Health – 1 year – Eugene Kolimaga
Planning Board – 5 years – Thomas Musco
Planning Board – 2 years – Kimberly MacPhee
Sewer Commissioner – 3 years – Vickie Paine
Library Trustee – 3 years – Mary O. Longworth
Athol-Royalston Regional School Committee – Royalston – 3 years – Kelly Newton
Trustees of the J.N. Bartlett – FOUR, one-year terms: (with only 3 candidates running) – Mary Barclay, Donna Caisse and Roland Hamel.

ed note: Tom Kellner is interested in being written-in as Tree Warden.

Annual Town Meeting

Friday, May 9, 2008

7 p.m., Royalston Community School

The last day to register to vote for the Annual Town Meeting is Friday, April 18, from 2-4 p.m. and 7-8 p.m. at Whitney Hall.

Luncheon Club & Council on Aging

Join the weekly luncheon Wednesdays at 11 am at Town Hall. Contact Betty Woodbury at 978-249-9656 by the Monday prior to the Wednesday meal to make a reservation. The suggested donation for the meal is \$2/senior and \$2.50 for up-and-coming seniors. Local grocery stores and farmers often provide baked goods and produce, all free for the taking!

Selectmen's News

Andy West, selectman

Keep sending your letters and emails supporting early funding for Rt 32 rehabilitation. Now it is even easier to add your support. Click the link in the "What's New" section of the webpage www.royalston-ma.gov and email the pre-written message or change it to your own words. You can also mail to PO Box 125, Royalston, MA 01368, or email awest-bos@royalston-ma.gov. Remember, we need help from residents in all parts of town.

There is good coverage in the South Village from the Whitney Hall wireless network. Soon the coverage will be even better. The antenna will be moved up to the roof in order to get the maximum range. Residents with desktop computers can purchase add-on wireless equipment to receive the signal (\$30-50). There is no cost to residents for the internet service! Residents within 1000 feet or so should be able to connect. Reception depends on distance, location, and interference from trees or buildings. If you are interested please email Selectman Andy West at awest-bos@royalston-ma.gov or call the Selectmen's office, 978-249-9641, for more information.

The Selectmen will participate in an action forum on May 3, 2008 at Mahar Regional School from 10a.m. to 4p.m. This forum was initiated by Hands Across North Quabbin organization in cooperation with school districts and community organizations. The forum brings together diverse groups from across the North Quabbin Community to establish a cooperative network and help forge a greater regional unity. To participate, call the Selectmen's office 978-249-9641.

Please Vote and Help HANDS Win \$25,000!

Hands Across North Quabbin Network (HANDS) Deliberative Democracy project is a top 20 finalist (out of 5000) in the Make It Your Own Awards sponsored by The Case Foundation, to see who can motivate the most people to vote for their favorite project online by April 22, 2008. The project is coordinated by Royalston Resident Mark Shoul. The top four projects will each win \$25,000 - and HANDS can be one of them with your support! Vote online here: <http://www.casefoundation.org/myvote>

For five years, community leaders in the rural, nine-town North Quabbin region of north central Massachusetts have been working to build trust among the region's diverse group of residents through community projects such as mentoring troubled youth, holding an interfaith Thanksgiving service and catalyzing a strategic planning process to help residents with different points of view find common ground over the future direction of one of the areas regional school districts. Our Network of community groups and individuals in North Quabbin needs support to continue organizing two annual public conversations °called "Action Forums". The first will identify a shared community concern. The second will determine an action plan for addressing the issue.

Please join us at our first public conversation: the May 3, 2008 Action Forum at Mahar High School in Orange, MA from 10:00 to 4:00.

Dear Governor Patrick and the State Department of Transportation

ed note: Is there a numbered route in the Commonwealth in worse shape than Royalston's Rt 32? Formal letters of complaint urging the state to fund timely repairs are needed by the Selectmen's office. A "letter" can take any appropriate form: a click on the petition on the town web-site, a scrawl of a few polite lines with an added signature, or a lamentation that even up-for-anything beat-niks might want to avoid the adventure of traveling our one-way road to Keene.

Keroac Country

Polly Longworth, resident

Jack Keroac and his friend Neil Cassidy set off in a junky bus across the country fifty years ago, and made history "on the road."

I wonder if they ever encountered a stretch of highway as exciting as a trip to Keene these days. Headed that way one morning in February, I entered the state road (ie. 32 north) from Davis Hill Rd. (our access) by avoiding a car-devouring pothole that's been growing for over a year right at the juncture of the two thoroughfares. That morning, with a bit of melt going on somewhere beneath the icescape, the pothole featured a geyser spouting up from an unseen freshet, so was easy to avoid (it couldn't be straddled).

The five miles to the NH state line was an obstacle course of ice and holes separated by frozen floes, icy ruts, packed snow ridges, and unidentifiable phenomena created by many weeks of snow-falls, freezing rains, and selective plowing. It kept this driver in avoidance mode, weaving nimbly and shifting between first and second gears for the next twenty minutes, entertaining all the while visions of a lost transmission or wrecked shock absorbers. Jolting along with the heaving gait of a ship in the Drake Passage, I wondered how many cars regular commuters to Keene had junked on this patch of torture this winter.

Then suddenly I was in N.H., and could shift into third, then fourth gears. Ah, the silken beauty of it! Discrete orange signs began appearing roadside - how sweet: "Caution. Frost Heave" they said, and "Bump Ahead." Sometimes the bump could be felt, but mostly it was like fussing over a pimple after enduring a truly horrible case of acne.

All this while I'd been in the blissful ignorance of expecting the great Commonwealth of MA was going to end Royalston's torture by fixing Rte. 32 in 2009. Only one more year to go, this driver kept thinking. But come to find out, there's actually two more years to go. Two more years for resident taxpayers to ruin their vehicles on a road that's a total disgrace in any season. Oh, I now daydream, oh to bring a busload of legislators and highway engineers out to our hinterland to enjoy an "on the road" experience of a highway in our NW corner of Worcester County.



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

978-249-3572 www.royalstonlibrary.org

Thank you

Gus Williams for a movie

Boyd Estus for the new PBS movie *Woody Guthrie Ain't Got No Home*

Marsha Charest for lots of different library supplies

To the individuals who did such great jobs introducing us to different cultures: **Martin Brown** from England, **Trong** from Thailand, **Celt Grant** who spent several years in the Peace Corps in Thailand, and **Beth Gospodarek**, who stepped in for **Eduardo Ramirez** to help us learn about Colombia.

Allison and **Allysa Bergquist** for cheerful help stuffing Friends of the Library membership letters.

Donations to the Friends

Thank you to the many residents who kindly responded to the recent Friends membership letter by making a contribution and joining the group. We work hard to put donations to good use. Bring ideas for improvements to any Friends meeting, 3:30 on the first Thursday of most months.

James and Maureen Meausky

Lorraine and Bob Casinghino

Steve and Cindy Savoy

Mary and John Coflesky

David and Shirley Putney

Virginia Moore

Paula and Rick Paul

James and Frances Hamilton

Bill and Suzanne Richard

Steph and John McClure

Gertrude Parnanen

Dan and Cheryl Mahoney

Rene Lake and Peter Gagliardi

The Landry family

Nanji and Walt Thorton

Jane Carlson and Jeremy Bussier

Phil Mickey and Nell Vaughn

Mary Hoag and Jim and Denise Bennett

Donald and Marlene Jarvenpaa

Aaron Ellison and Elizabeth Farnsworth

Roger O'Donnell and Reann LeBlanc

Rich DeMar

The Wood family

Geoffrey and Diana Newton

Leeora Mitchell

Donald Igoe and Pat Shea

Sara Dilg

Hugh Blake

Lillie Dobson

Werner Bundshuh

The White family

Teresa Burgess

Boucher Family

Arlene Dunham

Katrina Walton

Ralph and Joy Cutter

Boyd Estus

The Light at the End of the Tunnel:

For the first time in its history,

the library almost has a complete catalog!

So close. That's how it feels. As I've mentioned in these pages before, the Board of Library Commissioners and past librarians, have all bemoaned the fact that there wasn't an even-close-to-complete card catalog at the library. When I was interviewed over 14 years ago, one of my main goals in becoming librarian was to have a functioning card catalog. Well, after 14 years, we're close. (I won't go too far so as not to jinx anything, but it's getting there.) A little over a year ago we joined MassCat, an online cataloguing system heavily subsidized by the Central Massachusetts Regional Library System, and began bar coding and entering not only all the new books and other materials but also the existing collection in the hopes that someday we would have a digital circulating system as well. That eventuality came sooner than we thought when MassCat decided to change vendors and for a very reasonable price offered a circulating system as well.

If you see us burning the midnight oil, it's because we have to try to finish as much as we can before April 18th when preparations begin for the transition and all cataloging activity must cease. The new system goes into effect on July 1st and we'd like to be ready to circulate then or soon afterwards. What's also nice is the funds to pay for this cataloging are from the State Aid received for being a certified library and the Library Fund. So, even though we may be putting in some time, burning some oil, and using some electricity, we won't be going back to the town meeting for additional funds to cover the expenses.

As part of this process, we are going to be removing the paper catalog and thus the furniture that houses it from the reference room. We have begun shifting materials, adding many of our reference books to the circulating collection, getting rid of out-of-date materials, and doing general house keeping. In addition to more shelf room, we hope to incorporate an area where the incredible scrap book of the last century of Royalston life can be housed and easily browsed. We're excited about this transition as well as a little sad that we won't be able to pull out that little wooden drawer and thumb through the collection. And, you also won't hear one of us say, "If it's not in the catalog, it doesn't mean we don't own it." At least we hope that's the case!

Reading, Listening and Viewing

Recommendations from your Neighbors:

*Hannah Bartkus, grade 2, recommends **Igraine The Brave**, by Cornelia Funke. She says, "It is the best Listening Library I've ever heard. Igraine is a good friend, a very fearless knight and is not at all interested in magic. In her story, she is a squire helping to protect her parents and their magical castle. At Pimponel castle there are lots of secret ways to get in and out. Her parents and brother love magic, but Igraine has a dream of being a famous knight. This story helps me think about good things and not bad. It really inspires me a lot. I think it is the best."*

Come, Fly a Kite

The annual April Vacation kite flying extravaganza will be Thursday, April 24 at 2:30 pm behind the library. Thanks to the Bundschuh's for the use of their field. Dress for wet feet and hope for wind. Kites provided by the Friends of the Library or bring your own. Fabulous kite cake served and there will be opportunities to write poems celebrating kites, wind and the arrival of spring in honor of National Poetry Month.



Recipe of the Month- Cindy Savoy's Kite Cake

Cindy Savoy has stepped up to become the unofficial baker of Friends of the Library kids' events. For a few years now, she has provided the traditional 12th night cake and the kite cake on April Vacation. In my house, we are not particularly fans of cake (one kid asks for birthday pie), but Cindy's cakes are exceptional crowd pleasers.

Cindy says, "Growing up, my Mom's chocolate cake was my favorite! I don't have her recipe and tried many recipes before I found this one. It is almost as good as Mom's. Cindy lives with her husband Steve, daughter Kelsey and new pet bunnies on NE Fitzwilliam Rd just north of the Common.

Preheat oven to 375, and grease and flour a 13x9 inch pan.

Sift together into large bowl:

- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt

Combine in saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring constantly:

- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 stick butter
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa

Pour the hot mixture over the dry ingredients and stir together.

Whisk together, then stir into batter:

- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Scrape the batter into the pan, and bake until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, approximately 25 minutes. When making the Kite Cake, increase all ingredients by half, and use a 17x12 sheet pan. Then cut the cake into kite shape, frost with buttercream frosting and decorate.

Caitlin Barclay excitedly reports that the second installation in "The Chronicles of Narnia, **Prince Caspian**," is coming out in movie theaters in May, so NOW is the time to see or see again the first one, "The Chronicles of Narnia, The Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe," available on DVD.

Silver Lining Circus Update

Rick and Jackie Davis are incredibly busy and too popular. When the offer of a two week, high-paying gig came up, they felt compelled to take it, thus canceling out on their date to bring the circus to Royalston. In a final attempt, we're trying to schedule them for October. We appreciate the Cultural Council's funding of this venue and hope to have it this fall.

Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of National Library Week

During the week of April 13-19th the library will celebrate "Join the Circle of Knowledge @ Your Library" for National Library week by featuring library memorabilia from the last 50 years. Each person who visits the library may enter to win a prize in honor of the 50th anniversary of National Library Week, which celebrates libraries and those who use and support them.

Some of the New Books at your Library

Adult Fiction

- Bartoletti, Susan *The Boy Who Dared*
- Bock, Charles *Beautiful Children: A Novel*
- Choi, Susan *A Person of Interest*
- Delaney, Joseph *The Last Apprentice: Attack of the Fiend*
- Fielding, Joy *Charley's Web*
- Gordon, Roderick *Tunnels*
- Hall, James W *Hell's Bay*
- Hughes, Charolette *What Crazy Looks Like*
- Lescroart, John *Betrayal*
- Logsdon, Gene *The Last of the Husbandmen*
- Lupica, Mike *The Big Field*
- Penny, Louise *The Cruellest Month*
- Picoult, Jodi *Change of Heart*
- Price, Richard *Lush Life*
- Rice, Anne *Christ the Lord: The Road to Cana*
- Sinha, Indra *Animal's People*
- Steel, Danielle *Honor Thyself*

Adult Nonfiction

- Baur, Gene *Farm Sanctuary: Changing the Hearts and Minds about Animals and Food*
- Birkby, Robert *Mountain Madness*
- Faust, Drew Gilpin *The Republic of Suffering*
- Irvine, Amy *Trespass: Living at the Edge of the Promised Land*
- Lear, Martha Weinman *The What, When and Why of Normal Memory Loss*
- Oliver, Mary *Red Bird*
- Osteen, Joel *Become a Better You*
- Smith, Jeff *Bone: Ghost Circles*

John Chencharik has been on a M.C. Beaton jag lately. He finds her mysteries, set in small Scottish villages and filled with peculiar characters, a cozy accompaniment to mud season.

Kindergarten Registration at Royalston Community School

Kindergarten Registration at Royalston Community School for the 2008-2009 school year will be held on the half day, Wednesday, April 9th from 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. for any child that will be 5 years of age by September 1, 2008.

Kindergarten Screening will be held at Royalston Community School on Wednesday, May 7th. Appointments will be made for each child's screening on April 9th, during Kindergarten Registration. There will be No Kindergarten at RCS on May 7th. Call the school at 978-249-2900 for more information.

Other RCS dates of interest. Call 978-249-2900 for more info:

April 1 - Marks Close; April 8 - Hula Hoop Making Workshop after school; April 11- Report Cards; and April 21 - April 25-April Vacation.

April 7th - April 10th, a Scholastic Book Fair will be held in the media center. (Everyone welcome to shop; volunteer help welcomed.)

Family line dancing classes continue on Thursday evenings at 6 pm through April 17th. Drop-ins welcome. This community activity is funded with a grant from A-REF.

Also, on April 18th, all RCS Students will attend the musical *Alice in Wonderland* at MWCC. The cost of the trip is covered by the Royalston Academy, the parent-teacher group and families. The cast includes Royalston's own Ben West as the Ace of Spades.

Plan for the school-wide art show and musical extravaganza on Friday May 2nd.

RCS Poetry Club

Irish Jiggery

laughing, dancing leprechaun
in the open wind

by Colleen, Skyler, Felicia, Autumn, Emma and Abigail

Farms

Farms remind me of animals.

Animals remind me of rock walls.

Rock walls remind me of mending.

Mending reminds me of spring.

by Derek Bates

Monty Tech News

Monty Tech families planning summer vacations, plan accordingly....Labor Day weekend is fair game. Monty Tech's school year begins Wednesday, September 3. A half-day that Friday is planned for the first teacher in-service workshop. The ninth grade parent orientation is slated for Thursday, September 11, at 7 p.m.

Prospective Monty Tech students often ask, "What are the chances I'll actually get into the program I want?" They're actually quite good! This past year, 95.4% of incoming freshman (347 students) were placed in their first (298 students), second (19 students) or third (14 students) choices.

Camp Caravan Reunion:

Looking for Former Staffers and Campers

Millers River Educational Cooperative, the present owner of Camp Caravan (and the parent organization of the Village School) is planning a reunion for Camp Caravan staffers and campers in May, at Camp Caravan. Please spread the word, and give any names and contact addresses to Martin Brown or Cadence Brinkley at the Village School at 978-249-3505. We don't want to miss inviting anyone!

Save the date for these Village School events:

May Day at the Village School Thursday May 1

On Thursday, May 1, at 9:00 a.m., the Village School will host an old fashioned May Day celebration. Children can join in May Pole weaving and dancing. There will be singing of traditional tunes and rounds accompanied by local musicians. Rumor has it that the aging Millers River Morris Men will appear, unable to contain themselves, and leap and pound the earth to drive out winter and awaken the earth, and bring fertility to the crops, the fields, the animals and the people! Young and old will join in the uplifting "Shepherds' Hay" to complete the event. Everyone, young and old, is invited. This event will last under an hour, just enough time to welcome spring and evade the black flies. The Village School is located in the old brick Raymond School building on Royalston Common.

Also, Friday evening May 16, the Annual Village School play will take place at the Royalston Town Hall at 7 p.m. Every year the 4th-6th grade class writes an original play, this year based on their year-long study of the Industrial Revolution.

Geo. Lemon, Founder of High View Farm (now known as Camp Caravan), Featured in Glass Negatives Photo Exhibit at Gardner Library

The Gardner library is showing its small collection of glass negatives from the Lemon family, who used to own what is now Camp Caravan on Rte. 68. Many of the photos were taken at what was then called High View Farm, and later High View School. Before moving to Royalston, the Lemons lived in Gardner.

Four Seasons in North Worcester County: 1898-1924:

the Glass Negatives of George Lemon

Levi Heywood Memorial Library, Volunteer Room

55 W. Lynde St. Gardner



The Village School
On The Common
Royalston, MA 01368
978-249-3505
www.villageschool.to
Summer Programs for
children
Come to MAY DAY
Thursday May 1 at 9 a.m.
Then Saturday June 7
SATURDAY MORNING ON
ROYALSTON COMMON
Pancakes, Silent Auction, Yard Sale

Serving Preschool
Kindergarten
Grades 1-6

Athol High School News

Joy Cutter, school nurse

The AHS drama club will present *Into the Woods* on Thursday, April 17, Friday, April 18, and Saturday, April 19, 2008. Admission is free but donations will be accepted. Show time is 7PM each night with an additional 2 PM matinee scheduled for Saturday. The matinee is a family show, and children under the age of ten are encouraged to attend as there will be an extended intermission to allow children to meet the characters.

Act one includes Cinderella, Jack and the Bean Stalk, Little Red Ridinghood, and Rapunzel, based on Grimm's fairy tales. Act two reveals the consequences of wishes granted in act one. Small children may be frightened by the story line in the second act whereby some of the characters are stepped on and crushed by the giant. Parents with small children may wish to leave following intermission.

Royalston Easter Egg Hunt 2008- Thanks to All who Helped

Peter Gagliardi

More than 70 children plus adults participated in the annual Easter Egg hunt on the Royalston Common on Saturday, March 22. In the photo, the children are shown lined up, ready for the signal to begin their search for more than 2300 brightly colored, candy-filled Easter eggs. Following the hunt, everyone moved into the Town Hall to enjoy making Easter candies with more than 20 pounds of melted chocolate.

Event organizer Rene' Lake thanked the many volunteers and contributors for the success of this year's event. Helping out at the event were Noah, Colby, and Stormy Easton and their mom, Dawn Dawson; Marie-Claire Humblet; Linda and Addie Ramsdell; Peter Gagliardi; and the anonymous dishwasher. (sorry, we forgot your name but won't forget all of the help that you provided)

Rene' noted that the community responded generously to the call for contributions, led by a donation from the Royalston Fish and Game Club. Other contributors included: Kirsten Spencer, Marie Holmes, Maureen Meausky, Cindy Savoy, Becky Divoll, Doreen Sawyer, Sandy Knight, Marllys Kelley, Pamela Caranfa, Lorraine and Bob Casinghino, Theresa Quinn, Millie Clement, Andy and Kristen West, and Mary Coflesky. Rene' offered special thanks to the Royalston General Store, the Royalston Post Office, and the Phineas Newton Library for their help collecting donations. She also thanked any contributors who left their donations but not their names.



Congregational Churches Hire New Pastor

Just in time for Easter services, both Royalston Congregational churches voted to hire a new pastor, Rev. Jeff Francis along with his wife Judi, son Jamieson (6) and daughter, Jennah (18 months). Jeff is a professor at Zion bible college in Barrington RI. He was born and raised in Gifford, Penn., a town of 300 in the northeastern part of the state. He attended the Faith School of Theology and Zion Bible College. He earned a Master's degree from Gordon-Conwell theological Seminary in 2005.

If you are seeking a renewal of your faith in Christ, fresh motivation to study Christian texts, and a revived fellowship with siblings, neighbors and friends, please accept our invitation to attend Sunday morning services offered at 9 am in South Royalston and 11 am in Royalston center. For information, call 978-249-9155.

The 1st and 2nd Congregational Churches of Royalston Praise Team, accompanied by the Royalston Youth Group will be participating in the annual River Rat Parade on April 12th. We are blessed and thankful that Hamshaw Lumber company of Orange has donated a truck and driver for a float. This is sure to be an exciting outing as a praise band will be playing live music, powered by a generator. The Youth Group will be following the float on foot and handing out fliers about the Royalston Congregational Churches. This is a great opportunity for the churches to minister to the region and for the Youth and Praise teams to combine efforts to spread the good news!! Anyone interested should contact either Youth Leader Sue Veilleux at 978-249-5004 or Praise Team leader Ryan Hood at 978-544-1874, or by email at rw Hood@crossfiremu sicministries.com.

Also, the Youth Group is planning a Tully Lake Campground outing for this summer. The purpose of this retreat is for the youth to begin planning the Youth Sunday service, when the youth of our church perform all of the worship responsibilities. More information can be obtained by contacting Sue Veilleux at 978-249-5004. The Royalston youth group welcomes anyone age 12 (or sixth grade) through his/her senior year in college. Youth meetings are at the 1st Congregational Church each Sunday at 6 PM.

Earth Day Weekend Activies in Royalston

All- Town Roadside Clean Up

Pick up litter along our roads; dispose of it for free at Checkpoint Charlie, which is behind the post office. A cookout follows for all participants at noon at Bullock Park. For info: call Charlie Scribner 978- 929-2807. (Kids looking to help out but busy on Saturday mornings can pick up roadside litter anytime during their vacation. Then, bring it for disposal and attend the picnic on Saturday 4/26.)

Returnable Bottle and Can Drive;

(cell phones and printer cartridges recycled too!)

While in a Earth-conscious mood, don't forget to bring returnable bottles to the center fire station to be recycled and cashed in to benefit the Royalston Comunity School library. Also, printer cartridges and spent cell phones can be recycled that day at the fire station. Thanks to the Fernald School for help in recycling.

Wildlife Sighting:

LeAnne Limoges saw a **bobcat** at 7:45 a.m. on March 3rd on Athol Road between the Bartkus residence and the cemetery on the Common. Then Jen Bartkus saw the bobcat at the same spot around 9:00 a.m. She thinks this could explain the missing geese and ducks.

Signs of Spring

The sun is strong and the light lingering this time of year. Spring comes subtly to Royalston but it has arrived nonetheless. Scads of skunks are active, waddling down dark roads and giving dogs grief. Maples were tapped around March 4 and the sap ran strong all month. Red-winged blackbirds returned by the flockful on March 10. Herons, ducks and geese were all back on Saturday March 15. Woodcocks were heard on March 20. Baseball and softball rosters at AHS and ARMS have been announced. Ron Hutchins admired the crocus in his Stewart Rd yard on March 22. The 1st chive was snipped from an outdoor garden and added to a salad on March 28.

Rain Gardens Presentation

Join members of the North Quabbin Garden Club on Thursday, April 17, at 7 p.m. at the Millers River Environmental Center at 100 Main Street in Athol when Rachel Cabero, from the Massachusetts Riverways Coalition, will present a slideshow on the design and benefits of rain gardens. These gardens attract birds and butterflies, help to protect water resources, and make yards and neighborhoods more attractive.

An affiliate of the Millers River Environmental Center in Athol, the North Quabbin Garden Club formed in 2006 to encourage interest in all phases of home gardening. With efforts to promote better horticultural practices and foster civic beauty, emphasis is placed on use of native plants, organic gardening, and the conservation of natural resources. Monthly meetings are usually held on the third Thursday evening of each month featuring informative speakers or workshop sessions. Members are currently working on a wild-life habitat garden at the Millers River Environmental Center and planning their annual spring sale of perennial plants and specialty items. Guests and new members are always welcome, so join us this month and learn something new about gardening. Meetings are free to members and guests are asked for a \$5 donation.

Chicken Barbeque and Rotisserie Grill

Raffle Coming Up

The Royalston Fire and EMS Association will be holding a chicken barbeque at the Royalston Town Hall on the evening of Saturday, May 17th. Barbeque tickets, which always sell out, are available from any Royalston Fire Fighter for \$10. Also available are raffle tickets for the rotisserie grill, valued at \$3000. Proceeds from the barbeque and raffle will be used to purchase work uniforms for the EMS and fire fighters. Contact Joshua Morris-Siegel at 508-733-2243 for more information.

Wayne Newton Retirement Party

Tickets are available for the May 31st Retirement Party for Wayne Newton at the Elks Club, on Rt. 2A in Orange at 6:00p.m. Tickets are \$20 for a single and \$35 per couple and must be purchased by May 21st. Dinner is braised beef and there will be a D.J. for dancing afterwards. Call Geoffrey Newton at 978-249-3726 for more information and tickets.

Royalston Community Coop

The next order date for the COOP is Monday, April 14, and delivery will be Thursday, April 24. A guest catalogue is available for Royalston residents who are considering joining the coop. A one-time \$20 buy-in fee helps defray costs of invoicing, as well as a monthly subscription to the catalogue/price list which features hundreds of thousands of items including organically produced foods, non-toxic household cleaning agents and ecologically sound paper products. Anyone interested can contact Mary Barclay at 978-249-2598 or mcb Barclay@juno.com.

Spring into Shape

Ditch the workout; join the party. **Kristen Killay** (nee Monette), who is building a house on Neale Rd, is starting a Zumba class at the Clark in Winchendon Fridays 5 -6 pm, starting April 11 . Zumba is dance aerobics set to a world beat. Call the Clark for more info.

Ladies' Benevolent Society

The LBS held its annual reorganization meeting late in February. In addition to establishing the 2009 schedule of meetings and events, the group has agreed that it is important to focus on expanding the group, which has suffered the loss of many elder members during the past few years. In addition, the members voted to pledge a major, three-year fundraising commitment to the Village School Capital Campaign. Village School Director Rise Richardson is preparing an array of naming opportunities that will be offered in appreciation of the LBS commitment. Members will select one of the offered naming opportunities at the April 30th meeting. All members are encouraged to invite a non-member to join them for the meeting!



CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD NEWS

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

The Nunes family on Athol-Richmond Rd have lots of news: **AR Brian Nunes**, US Navy, has just left on board the USS Abraham Lincoln for a 7 month deployment in the Pacific. He is a member of Strike Fighter Squadron 34, stationed in Virginia Beach.

Sgt. Kevin Nunes, US Army, was married to **Arloth Cudia** in the Phillipines on January 23, 2008. He is currently stationed at Ft. Stewart, GA, after serving for 3 years in Korea.

Deb and Joe Nunes are delighted to welcome two grandbabies to their lives: daughter Laura and husband Dan welcomed their son Hayden, on December 20, 2007; and daughter Jen and husband David welcomed their daughter Lillyanna on March 14, 2008. Proud big brothers Alex and Joshua attended RCS last year.

Ryan Gaudet, a student at Monty Tech, won a bronze medal in Computer Maintenance Technology in a SkillsUSA competition.

Josh Roberts at ARMS as well as **Michael Demboske**, **Abbi Poirier** and **Janelle Poirier** at Monty Tech were left off the mid-year academic honor rolls last newsletter. Moreover, **Abbi Poirier** was 1st in her freshmen class.

Mieka Melbourne, **Dana Griffith** and **Kimberlee Thompson** were named students of the month in February at Athol High School.

Big Smiles on Norcross Road at the Caisse household: **Lindsey J. Caisse** was named to the Dean's List last semester at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, where she is a senior in the Forsythe Dental Hygiene program. She is currently fulfilling her second semester internship in the Periodontal Department of Boston University's Goldman School for Dentistry.

With 5 gyms from as far away as Cambridge MA and Greenville, NH competing, **Tiffany Lusco** came in 1st in the level 5 USA Gymnastics competition on March 9 at Montachusett Gymnastics in Fitchburg.

Cultural Council News

Royalston Cultural Council Wins Award

At a Massachusetts Cultural Council Statewide Assembly March 12 at the State House in Boston, the Royalston Cultural Council was cited for facilitating a "Gold Star" project, for its long-running Open Mic series. **Marie-Claire Humblet** and **Sonja Vaccari** attended the assembly. They had been nominated for the award by **Joann Deacon**, who will officially present a "Gold Certificate" at the **April 4th, First Friday Open Mic**. The Open Mic project was honored because it provides opportunities for so many people to participate and enjoy local talent, and because it has been going on for so long.

Follies 5/10/08



The Follies will take place on May 10. Tap into the wonderful creative spirit of Royalston and call Patience Bundschuh (249-6081), who is in charge of the line up. Tickets are \$5 and are on sale at the Open Mics and with Lorraine Casinghino 249-5151.

Dick Corser modeling "Sea Creature" by Sonja Vaccari at the 2002 Follies

Quattro Cor Presents Concert In Royalston

Sunday April 6, 2008 3 P.M. "The History of the Garden Hose..."ahem, that is the "French Horn"

Featuring Jean Jeffries, Chris Mortensen, Margot Rowland, and Royalston resident Becky Hardie, the quartet takes a fun and lively look at the 'horn' and its rich history from forest to the concert hall. Complete with garden hoses, conch shells, and, well, French Horns, Quattro Cor will delight all. Program will include music by Shaw, Wilder, Hindemith, Rossini and Gasparini. From motets to Jazz, the quartet covers the spectrum of musical genres. Please come enjoy the show courtesy of the Royalston Cultural Council, and stay for refreshments.



ABOUT THE QUARTET: The quartet members are all well-known professional musicians and educators in the Pioneer Valley. They have had extensive performance experience and enjoy interacting with audiences to share their love of music and the beautiful sounds of the horn.

The Epic Eel

Elizabeth Farnsworth

As the Millers River begins to thaw, American eels are trying to make their way upstream to areas where they may remain for twenty years or more before migrating back to their birthplace thousands of miles away.

An eel's life is truly an epic journey. They hatch from eggs laid in the 2-million-square-mile area of warm water known as the Sargasso Sea, an immensely productive, seaweed-choked swath stretching from the Azores to the Bahamas. Larvae an inch or two in length float in the currents for up to a year before getting the itch to change form and relocate. At this point, the larva transforms into a "glass eel," so called because it is a transparent, tiny version of the adult, resembling a see-through earthworm (that some people find delicious). Some of these glass eels will stay on to mature in the Sargasso Sea, while most others migrate in autumn into estuaries of the east coast such as Chesapeake Bay and the lower Connecticut River. This versatility in lifestyle may explain why eels have flourished for over 50 million years...til now, that is. Upon reaching coastal marshes, the glass eel becomes pigmented and begins to grow in earnest and to feed on insects, worms, snails, and other fish. Many male eels will remain for years in estuaries, but others – primarily adventurous females – tend to travel much farther inland.

Migrating juveniles, called elvers, face formidable hurdles trying to surmount the many dams on northeastern rivers. Picture yourself trying to slither up a vertical wall without legs, much less rock-climbing gear! Eels can actually crawl, in or out of water, for short distances if they can gain traction on a rough surface, but dams and rushing waters create a challenging barrier. Seeing the numbers of eels seriously decline throughout their range, biologists have begun designing ingenious "eelways" that offer carefully-placed footholds tailored to the average size of migrating elvers – much like a rock-climber's practice wall. An eelway installed on the mouth of the Westfield River has enabled more than a thousand elvers to pass upstream successfully. Another eelway is being planned for our very own Millers River; the eel migration will be monitored by volunteers and classes from nearby schools.

Eels lucky enough to make it safely to their favored freshwater havens may live for decades, with the females reaching up to five feet in length and turning yellow-brown. Then, one night in autumn, wanderlust sets in again and it is time for the eel to return to the Sargasso Sea to spawn. Now fully mature, the eel turns deep gray and begins its long trek downstream during long, dark nights – a trip as fraught with danger as the upstream swim. Reaching the Caribbean climes by January, males and females reunite and produce the next generation of globe-trotters.

Why should we care about *Anguilla rostrata*, the only freshwater eel in the western hemisphere? Besides being a delicacy for certain gourmet markets, the eel is a dietary mainstay for birds and other fish. Like other migratory fish such as salmon and shad, eels are a symbol of a well-connected river system that is healthy from its source to the sea.

Garden Notes

Larry Siegel

Despite numerous daytime temperatures in the 40's and several substantial rains, the garden remains snow-covered and it is difficult for me to focus on matters agricultural. So the mind wanders. Like to roads. How about those roads? We have successfully installed town-wide speed bumps. The rose among the thorns: traffic has slowed considerably. And those persisting in getting from here to there in the least time possible will be helping the local economy when obliged to frequent area garages for suspension repairs. I write with a certain authority, the transmission on my late, lamented Toyota pick-up dangling from the under-carriage. I have been advised to make the gardening-road connection. Well, the truck, which previously transported me and my wares to farmers' market, will no longer transport me and my wares to farmers' market. And there you have it, the first casualty of the 2008 garden season.

My activities have not been quite garden-less. Just for yucks, I dug through two feet of snow and ice at the beginning of March in search of parsnips. The ground was frost-free but no parsnips were to be found. It might have something to do with the fact that I had dug in the hollyhock bed. Success two weeks later when I was obliged to dig through only one foot of snow and ice and I have been extracting parsnips ever since.

Those conscientious about monitoring their orchards will annually prune their fruit trees. I, decidedly less than conscientious, practice pruning perhaps once a decade. I am out there now, cutting away ten years worth of crossed branches, damaged limbs, and suckers (vertical growths triggered by prior pruning). In theory, I am opening up the tree some, providing light and space, and ultimately, finer looking fruit. In practice, since finer looking fruit is not my top priority, I am out there performing the only garden-like task possible at this time. The problem with pruned trees is that they appear, well, pruned. To remind myself of the look of an unpruned apple tree, I let the Northern Spy go, a magnificent tangle of branches and limbs reaching for the sky.

The maple season continues apace. Barely two weeks old (the trees were tapped on March 6), we have already boiled down more syrup than all last year. With conditions outdoors alternately wet, windy, or wet and windy, it has thus far been an indoor activity, the wood cook stove working overtime and the house saturated with moisture, each gallon of syrup secured requiring the boiling away of twenty-nine gallons of sap. (Sauna-like conditions prevail in the kitchen). Only a handful of Royalston households (and a small handful at that) persist in boiling down sap. With twenty taps, we are significantly eclipsed by Jim and Barbara Richardson's one hundred and seventy taps. The Richardson's report an outstanding year and they expect to exceed last year's yield of fifty-three gallons. The decline in maple production in town mirrors the decline of all things agricultural. Sadly, only old farts like me persist in farm-type activities, and, like dinosaurs, they (the old farts as well as the activities) are well on their way toward extinction. In short order, it is likely that Royalston will be officially designated a farm-free zone.

Classified Ads

House Cleaning done in your home – 4 hr for \$49.95. Royalston resident. Ask for Fran. Home – 978-249-4596. Cell – 978-895-0817. Also Dog Walking \$15.00 will walk 2x-a-day.

For Sale:

Limited Quantities of **dark, flavorful maple syrup**. Call John Divoll at 978-249-3158.

Taking orders for **Green Firewood** cut (average of 16”), split and delivered locally for \$150 per 170 cubic foot truckload. Leave a message for Jim at Putney’s Mill, 978-249-3379.

Zippy **2003 Subaru Impreza** w/ 73,000 miles. Standard transmission 5 speed. Runs great. Reasonable mpg. Driven by a little old lady and her dog-- with small dings to prove it. \$7,700. 978-249-0358.

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