

THE ROYALSTON COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Dec.2008/Jan.2009



Volume XI, Issue X

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

Calendar of Events

December 3 Wednesday

6 pm **Live Nativity** at 1st Congregational Church on the Common
6:30 pm **Annual Town Tree Lighting** at Town Hall. Carols, cocoa and cookies. Visit by jolly old elf.
7 pm. **Monty Tech School Com** meets

December 4 Thursday

3:45 pm **Friends of the Library meeting.** All welcome.

December 5 Friday

Hajj, the first day observing the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, begins at sunset. Ends December 8.

7 - 10 pm **Open Mic** at Town Hall. Come to listen or to take the stage. Purchase home-made dinner fare and goodies provided by the Cultural Council.

December 7 Sunday **Pearl Harbor Day**

2 pm **Craft Scandinavian straw ornaments** with Kathy Morris at Royalston Town Hall. \$5 materials fee. Pre-registration necessary 249-3572. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

December 9 Tuesday

noon **RCS early dismissal.** No Kindergarten. Lunch served.

December 13 Saturday

All night long **Geminid Meteor Shower** one of the best light shows of the year in clear weather with more than a meteor a minute shooting across the northeast skies.

December 15 Monday **U.S. Bill of Rights Day**

10:30 am **Library Preschool Storytime Holiday Party**, seasonal stories, snacks and craft for the under 5 set.

December 16 Tuesday

6:30 pm **RCS Holiday Concert**, a sentimental favorite

December 17 Wednesday

7:30 p.m. **Ladies' B. Holiday Basket Packing** at home of Theresa Quinn. New members and curious potential members welcome!

December 20 Saturday

Christmas Bird Count. "Citizen Science". The longest running bird data in the area. Contact Dave Small at MREC to participate in this nationwide annual event. 978-413-1772, dave@dhsml.net

December 21 Sunday

7:04 a.m. **Winter Solstice**

Yule, a Christian celebration. (Wiccans celebrate the evening before.)

Hanukkah, a Jewish holiday, begins at sunset

December 24 Wednesday

Christmas Eve
Close of School **Monty Tech** **December Vacation begins**

December 25 Thursday

Christmas Day

December 28 Sunday

Muharram, Islamic New Year 1430

December 31 Wednesday

New Year's Eve

January 1 Thursday

Happy 2009!
Japanese New Year 2669

January 2 Friday

7 - 10 pm **Open Mic** at Town Hall. Come to listen or to take the stage. Purchase home-made dinner fare and goodies.

January 4 Sunday

Predawn hours **Quadrantid Meteor Shower** with a shooting star every few minutes, originating in northern skies.

Perihelion: Earth makes its closest pass to the sun for the year today.

January 5 Monday

Twelfth Night; Epiphany
Monty Tech and **ARRSD** reopens following December vacation
3:45 pm **Friends of the Library meeting.**

January 6 Tuesday

3 pm **Free family Zumba dance classes at RCS.** (Zumba is a high-energy hybrid of aerobics and rumba.) Funded by A-REF. Call the school 249-2900 to register.

January 10 Saturday

10:27 pm **Full Wolf Moon**

January 17 Saturday

1 - 3 pm **Pastel Workshop:** The Da-Vinci Mode. Artist Gregory Maichack brings a fun, hands-on workshop to Town Hall. Cultural Council sponsored.



January 19 Monday

Martin Luther King Day
Schools, post office, library closed

January 20 Tuesday

No School in ARRSD professional development day

January 26 Monday

Year of the Ox
Chinese New Year 4707

2:55 a.m. **New Snow Moon**

10:30 am **American Sampler** for ages 4-10 at Town Hall. Jeff Davis guides students through parts of our nation's heritage through songs, clogging, banjo tunes, and more. Sponsored by the Cultural Council.

Royalston's Election Results, Nov. 4, 2008

Out of 915 registered voters, 693 voted in this election

OFFICE/CANDIDATES	PCT 1	PCT 2	TOTAL
PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT			
BALDWIN AND CASTLE	1	1	2
BARR AND ROOT	2	3	5
MCCAIN AND PALIN	160	99	259
MCKINNEY AND CLEMENTE	4	5	9
NADER AND GONZALEZ	2	5	7
OBAMA AND BIDEN	246	151	397
BLANK	4	5	9
OTHER	3	2	5
TOTALS	422	271	693

SENATOR IN CONGRESS

JOHN F. KERRY	241	156	397
JEFFRY K. BEATTY	135	92	227
ROBERT J. UNDERWOOD	33	14	47
BLANK	13	9	22
TOTALS	422	271	693

REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS

JOHN W. OLVER	285	187	472
NATHAN A. BECH	112	66	178
BLANK	25	18	43
TOTALS	422	271	693

COUNCILLOR - SEVENTH DISTRICT

THOMAS J. FOLEY	296	207	503
BLANK	125	64	189
OTHER	1		1
TOTALS	422	271	693

SEN. IN GENERAL COURT - WORC,

HAMPDEN, HAMPSHIRE & FRANKLIN COUNTIES

STEPHEN M. BREWER	355	237	592
BLANK	66	34	100
OTHER	1		1
TOTALS	422	271	693

REPRESENTATIVE IN GENERAL COURT

SECOND WORCESTER DISTRICT

ROBERT L. RICE	262	180	442
CAROLYN A. KAMUDA	80	63	143
BLANK	80	28	108
OTHER			
TOTALS	422	271	693

REGISTER OF PROBATE WORCESTER COUNTY

STEPHEN G. ABRAHAM	297	209	506
BLANK	125	62	187
TOTALS	422	271	693

News from the Open Space Committee

Implementing the Community Preservation Act

Aaron Ellison, Chair

At the November 4th general election, voters in Royalston approved the adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) by a vote of 350-311. What happens next?

First, the Selectboard will appoint a CPA Committee. According to the CPA by-law passed at Town Meeting in June 2008, the CPA Committee will consist of eight members: the Building Inspector, one individual from each of the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Board of Public Welfare, Historical Commission, Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee, and one at-large member. This Committee will solicit ideas from town residents for CPA projects and make recommendations to Town Meeting about which projects merit support. All recommendations must be approved by voters at Annual Town Meeting in order for any funds to be spent.



Mariah Mallett casts the last ballot of the day in Precinct 1 as poll worker Nancy Bolton turns the crank on the voting machine. Photo: Barclay

QUESTION # 1	(Phase out state income tax)		
YES	107	74	181
NO	312	192	504
BLANK	3	5	8
TOTALS	422	271	693

QUESTION # 2	(Decriminalize small amounts of marijuana) *		
YES	310	191	501
NO	106	75	181
BLANK	6	5	11
TOTALS	422	271	693

QUESTION # 3	(Close greyhound racing tracks)		
YES	256	113	369
NO	154	150	304
BLANK	12	8	20
TOTALS	422	271	693

QUESTION # 4	(Community Preservation Act)		
YES	243	107	350
NO	160	151	311
BLANK	19	13	32
TOTALS	422	271	693

*According to the Worcester Telegram & Gazette, Royalston had the highest percentage voting "yes" from among all the municipalities in Worcester Co. 73.6% were in favor. Statewide, about 65 percent voted yes. In other towns, here are some percentages -- Athol 68, Orange 67, Petersham 69, Phillipston 65.

Second, the CPA Committee will work with the Tax Collector to implement the CPA surcharge on our annual property tax bills. The CPA surcharge will appear for the first time on fiscal year 2010 tax bills which will be sent out about one year from now, in November 2009. The first matching funds from the state should arrive in October 2010.

So in the mean time, be thinking about what projects the CPA might fund. The scope of the CPA is broad and includes preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties and resources; creation and subsequent maintenance of recreational facilities; construction or renovation of affordable housing; and purchase and conservation of open space for use by everyone in town.

And if you're interested in serving on the CPA committee, either as a town board representative or as an at-large member, please contact the Board of Selectmen.

News from the Town Clerk

Melanie Mangum

978-249-0493

Hours: M: 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Tue: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Annual Town Election : Although the Presidential Election dust is still settling, it's time for reminders and dates for the upcoming Town Election in April. (Mon., April 6, 2009). Nomination papers for open seats will be available in mid-Jan. Although it's too early to announce who will be running for re-election, look for a posted list or check the town website as the deadline to file nomination papers (Feb. 16, by 5 p.m. at the town clerks office) approaches. Positions that will be on the ballot: Selectman – 3 years; Athol-Royalston School Committee - Royalston – 3 years; Moderator – 3 years; Tree Warden – 3 years; Assessor – 3 years; Cemetery Commission – 3 years; Board of Health – 3 years; Library Trustee – 3 years; Board of Public Welfare – 2 years; Board of Public Welfare – 3 years; Planning Board – 5 years; Sewer Commission – 3 years; 4, 1-year terms on the John N. Bartlett Fund. There will also be a few Athol seats on the Athol-Royalston School Committee on the ballot.

2009 Dog licenses will be available mid-January. 2008 Dog Licenses expire on March 31, 2009. Dog Licenses are available by visiting the Town Clerk's Office during regular business hours. Single, altered dog licenses are \$6.00, unaltered, \$10.00. Kennel licenses for 4 or more dogs are also available.

Census 2009: The 2009 census will be coming to your household in January. Please remember your response is required by law. Your voter registration IS affected if a census form is not returned. Please also remember that you cannot register to vote, unregister to vote, or change your party on your census form. If a member of your household is a registered voter and has moved out of town, that person must send a signed confirmation in order to be deleted from your household.

Inspect Solid Fuel Burning Appliances

With recent high heating oil costs, many have been switching to other home heating sources. Geoff Newton , building inspector, reminds residents that the State Building Code requires a permit and inspection of room heaters, stoves, fire place inserts, furnaces, and boilers that burn wood, wood pellets, coal and other solid fuels. These appliances must be installed in a location and manner to insure satisfactory combustion, chimney draft and operating temperature. Please know that it is no longer permitted for two solid fuel appliances to be vented into one chimney flue and that a 36" clearance from nearby combustibles, such as furniture and plants, must be attained. Nearby floors must be covered with a suitable noncombustible surface as well. Smoke detectors need to be working properly and placed in every bedroom and on each floor. Carbon monoxide detectors should be on each floor, including basements but excluding uninhabitable attics. Those who have installed any solid, fuel-burning appliance but are not in compliance with these state regulations risk not being covered by their home insurance policy. The building inspector's office is available to come to homes to check if these appliances are properly installed.

Board of Health News, Phil Leger, chair

Please, when depositing items in the paper container, leave out non paper items, such as plastic bags, styrofoam peanuts, and styrofoam packing. Paper bags are fine . With the holiday season coming, be careful of wrapping paper that is plastic or metallic base. Plain paper wrap is fine, but please no bows, string, gift ties etc in the paper bin. In the bottles and cans bin, please only put gallon or less sized bottles and cans. Plastic toys, lawn furniture, etc. cannot be processed mechanically. It's too big for the equipment. We now have two containers available for bottles and cans. Be sure to pay attention to the signage and use the correct one. If in doubt, ask the attendants. Have a safe and peaceful holiday season.

Board of Selectmen's Corner

Route 32 Update: The 75% plan is being prepared for submission and is going well. This will include opinions on the project from some local boards. The submission should be ready to send to MassHighway in mid-December. Then, after review, MassHighway will return comments and suggestions to the Town in preparation for the 100% submission. The 100% level will kick off the bid cycle to allow contractors to start bidding the job. The bid process will start in early spring at the earliest.

Economics: Rumors of cuts in current and next year's State funding are spreading from Boston. The Board continues to closely monitor current spending in case emergency action is necessary. In addition, the Selectmen are asking departments to analyze their budgets in case cuts need to be made.

Budget Time: It's Town budget time again! Department heads have been asked to submit their fiscal 2010 budget. The fiscal year 2010 will start July 1, 2009. The Board has asked the town departments to submit budgets with level funding as well as five and ten percent reductions. Last year's budget was already tight. With gloomy predictions from the state, we are hoping fund the budget without cutting services!

Verizon Phone Service: Verizon technicians swarmed into Royalston in response to the citizen petitions and trouble calls received from residents. As we all suspected, they found several wiring issues that had been compounded over the years. Keep calling Verizon with your trouble issues. They have indicated a willingness to dig deeply into our phone issues.

The Board of Selectmen wishes all of you a safe and happy holiday season.

Telecommunication Update

Marsha Charest, citizen activist

THANKS to everyone who signed the petitions and complaint forms regarding the poor telephone service experienced in South Royalston. A hard copy of all has been mailed to Senators Kerry, Kennedy, Brewer and Rosenberg; area Representatives Donelan, Gobi, Rice, and Kulik; Congressman Olver and Governor Patrick. (I couldn't email because the .zip file was too big to be accepted)

As many know, the initial public meeting with Verizon was postponed. I was invited to meet with the Selectboard and Verizon representatives on October 20th. At that time, Verizon was given a hard copy of all the signed petitions and every complaint letter. It requested phone numbers of the individuals listed on the petitions so that they could track where the problems were occurring. With the help of Linda Alger from the Selectboard, I was able to provide that information. I've received a verbal communication that Verizon has been finding and repairing problems with the lines in South Royalston. Verizon has requested ALL problems, no matter how insignificant, be reported to 978-555-1611. Calling, (even if it is after the fact and the problem already fixed) lets Verizon log the problem and track the areas. If your line goes down, when it comes back, please log the call. If you hear echoes, another person, static, no dial tone, anything -- report it.

Phinehas S. Newton Library News

Kathy Morris, Library Director

Trustees: Polly Longworth, 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

* **Gabriel Dawson, Sandy Knight, Diana Newton, Tina Plummer, Theresa Quinn, and Jen and Kevin Scherrer** for donating books and materials.

* **Barb Richardson** for a charming bathroom mirror

* **Jen Bartkus, Lori Bergquist Darling, Dawn Dawson, Mitch Grosky, Nancy Melbourne, and Sherrie Miner** for volunteering to read to classes on Community Reading Day 2008 at the Royalston Community School. Thanks also to the Athol Public Library for organizing the day and to the Rotary Club for the purchase of the books.

* Local author **Kathy Chencharik**, who has donated a copy of a collection of short stories entitled *Deadfall: Crime Stories* by New England writers. Kathy's photograph of the old gate at Riverside Cemetery was chosen as the cover photo on the book and her short story "Shot by Mistake" is one of the entries in the book.

* the **Royalston Cultural Council**, which recently awarded \$935 towards a stipend for the writing/ editing/ layout of this newsletter.

Scraps from the Town Scrapbook

Thank you to Arlene Dunham and her daughter Rita Gates, who saw the photo in last month's newsletter and kindly confirmed that the couple was indeed going to the bicentennial ball. They also lent several photos of the event for the town scrapbook, including this one and a nice picture of the "Bicentennial Belles," dozens of women from town who sewed themselves home-steaders costumes.



The Brothers of the Brush was a group of town menfolk who competed to grow the best beard for the town bicentennial celebration in 1965. Those who cut their beards early paid a fine. Shown here in their hirsute glory in the Bicentennial parade are: top - Glen Bishop, Ronald Dennis, Earl Lindell; seated - Mr. Langlois and Huck Dunham. The town's 250th anniversary is coming right up. Start growing right now gentlemen and experience the full 7 year itch.

Local Poet Featured

Arlene Dunham, who just turned 92, is the featured poet at the library this winter. A Royalston resident most of her life, she wrote poems about her experiences "in good times and bad". She is a recent recipient of an award from the 2008 Free Poetry Contest. Her notepad of poems is available for perusal in the library reference room. Here is a sample of her work:

No Regrets

*If some little word that I may write,
can bring a smile to just one face,
or perhaps a cleansing tear,
I will not have "penned" in vain,
nor regret that I was here.*

Art Exhibits

Melanie Rajaniemi of Frye Hill will have her beautiful acrylic landscapes and seascapes exhibited throughout the month of December. During January and February, Bliss Hill resident **Cynthia Ross-Hamilton** will have her folk-art paintings on display and during March and April, **Phil Mickey**, also of Bilss Hill, will have his pen and ink and pencil portraits and landscapes on view. Stop by and see what talented people reside in Royalston. And let us know if you've created art and would like to display it in the children's room. (Pictures and photographs must be able to be hung on hangers or displayed on small easels on top of the bookcases.) The newly painted walls and lighting make a great backdrop.

Preschool Story Time Holiday Party and Vacation Schedule

On Monday, December 15th at 10:30 there will be a holiday party during the library preschool story time with holiday crafts, food and stories. All preschoolers and their caregivers are invited to attend. No pre-registration is required. There will be regular Monday morning library hours but no story time on December 22nd or December 29th. It will resume on Monday, January 5th.

Upcoming Friends of the Library Events

December Craft Workshop: On Sunday, December 7th at 2:00 p.m. at the Royalston Town Hall, Library Director Kathy Morris will lead a workshop on making Scandinavian style straw ornaments. There is a supplies fee of \$5.00. Space is limited and pre-registration is required by calling or stopping by the library.

Possible 12th Night Contra Dance on Jan. 4. Stay tuned.

Kids' Cross Culture Club is planned for Thursdays in February - March 3:30 - 4:30. If you'd like to present a 45- 50 minute introduction to a foreign culture complete with typical snacks from that area for 12-20 local children, please call the library. Small stipend and materials fee provided.

Resident Recommended Reading

Jeff Mangum recommends *My Stroke of Insight* by Jill Bolte Taylor. He raves, "This book will open your mind to your awesome brain!"

Deb Nunes says *Anticancer - A New Way of Life* by Dr. David Servan-Schreiber "may just be the most important book you will ever read! How is that for a claim? The author recounts his 15 year journey with brain cancer. His theories about what both fosters and inhibits cancer growth are becoming more prevalent in the medical world, particularly the role inflammation plays, not only in cancer development but also in heart disease, stroke, and other major health issues. The premise that cancer cells lie dormant within all of us and that we must take care of the "terrain" in which they exist, creating the most inhospitable climate possible, is, to me, both interesting and logical. Dr. Servan-Schreiber outlines the choices we can make concerning changes in our environment and the foods we consume, combining both conventional and alternative methods. I found that there is nothing radical or extreme in this book; most of his recommendations we have all heard before. I strongly urge you to read this book and consider its message."

Reading non-fiction, particularly biographies and science books, in the library children's room is an easy way to get a lot of accurate concentrated information in just a few entertaining, illustrated pages. Two recommended recent additions to the children's collection:

Little Beauty by Anthony Browne has the most endearing illustrations and tells the true story of the gorilla who learned sign language at the San Diego Zoo and his pet cat, Beauty. A quality 5-minute read. Only grinchers won't be smiling at the end.

What to Do about Alice by Barbara Kerley is a narrative about Teddy Roosevelt's daughter Alice, who didn't want anyone to pity her. Even though her mother died two days after she was born and she wore leg braces through pre-adolescence, she still managed to charm the world with her mischievousness and open-hearted global adventures. Maybe the Obama girls will follow her example of happy hi jinx in the White House (although Alice had a leg up; she had a giant tortoise as a pet, not just a pooch. Aren't tortoises hypo-allergenic?)

Top 5 Reasons to Use the Library during a Recession

The library is always a wonderful resource, but it can be especially so in hard economic times. First, it's warm- both emotionally and thermally. Second, it has the high-ish speed internet unavailable in most parts of town. This is indispensable for job searches, academic research and (library appropriate) entertainment. Third, it's cheap. Tax dollars cover the costs of borrowing books, movies, museum passes and music in Royalston as well as at other participating public libraries throughout Massachusetts. Next it's a place to build community. Tough times can be isolating. The library is an easy destination. It's a place to get out of the house, meet neighbors and hear the latest local buzz. Why not take advantage of these services available without charge? Lastly, **on Saturdays in December, the library will continue the tradition of serving coffee, cocoa, tea, cider and goodies from 9 am - noon.**

Some of the New Books

New Adult Non-Fiction

Belanger, Jeff *Weird Massachusetts*

Blount Jr., Roy *Alphabet Juice*

Couwenhoven, Teri *Teaching Children with Down Syndrome about their Bodies, Boundaries, and Sexuality*

Garten, Ina *Barefoot Contessa Back to Basics: Fabulous Flavor from Simple Ingredients*

Heat-Moon, William *Least Roads to Quoz: An American Mosey*

Sparks, Nicholas *Three Weeks with My Brother*

Stewart, Martha *Martha Stewart's Cooking School*

New Adult Fiction

Bear, Elizabeth *All the Windwrecked Stars*

Card, Orson Scott *Enders in Exile*

Challinor, C.S. *Christmas is Murder*

Chute, Carolyn *The School on Heart's Content Road*

Connelly, Michael *The Brass Verdict*

Dawson, Geralyn *Always Look Twice*

Deaver, Jeffrey *The Bodies Left Behind*

DeMille, Nelson *The Gate House*

Fowler, Christopher *The Victorian Vanishes*

Glass, Julia *I See You Everywhere*

Hart, Carolyn *Ghost at Work*

James, P.D. *The Private Patient*

Johansen, Iris *Dark Summer*

Kellerman, Jonathan *Bones*

King, Stephen *Just After Sunset*

Kleypas, Lisa *Seduce me at Sunrise*

Larsson, Steig *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*

Maguire, Gregory *A Lion Among Men*

McCaffrey, Todd *Dragonheart*

McCall Smith, Alexander *The World According to Bertie*

Morrison, Toni *A Mercy*

Muller, Marcia *Burn Out*

Parker, Robert *Rough Weather*

Rhodes, David *Driftless*

Robb, J.D. *Salvation in Death*

Shreve, Anita *Testimony*

Steel, Danielle *A Good Woman*

Updike, John *The Widows of Eastwick*

Vincenzi, Penny *An Outrageous Affair*



Firefighter Graduation

Seven Royalston firefighters recently graduated from the Mass Fire Academy Firefighter I & II training hosted by the Winchendon Fire Department. The team learned a series of fire fighting and rescue skills to bring their training up to Massachusetts State recognized levels. Members of three other area fire departments also took part. Several firefighters plan to continue to on to take the State exam for certification. This is the first group of Royalston firefighters to accomplish this new format training. Senator Brewer spoke to the graduates in support of their training and skills. Graduates (Front Row): Lt. Craig LeRay, FF. John Phelps, FF. Michael Caisse, FF. Robert Newton, Lt. Larry Porter, FF. James Barclay, FF. Josh Morris-Siegel. Assistant Instructors from Royalston (Rear): Dept. Chief Thomas LeRay, Chief Keith Newton, Asst. Chief Maurice Bateman, Dept. Chief James Putney



Royalston Emergency Management Agency

Jim Barclay, EMD 978-249-2904 ema@royalston-ma.gov

Reverse 9-1-1 is in place in Royalston. If ever an emergency message needs to be quickly spread, a newly-enabled program will allow simultaneous phone calls to go to every household in the Town of Royalston. Trials of this system will be held in the coming weeks, partly to test the system itself, but also to allow residents a chance to become familiar with it. Those with caller ID will see, depending on their phone screen's capabilities, some portion of "Worcester County Sheriff." Barclay will be spot checking with residents to verify that it is reaching all homes. Once the main system has been tested, calling lists for specific populations will be entered – among them, those on the water and sewer lines; those with electricity-dependent medical equipment; houses in flood-prone areas, and so forth.

A regional **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) class** is scheduled through Gardner's EMA, and Royalston resident teens, adults and family groupings are invited. This free training shows participants how to best help themselves and others in an emergency or disaster. Orientation takes place Sat. 1/ 17 at 9 a.m. in the Gardner Emergency Operations Center and continues with weekly sessions during January and February. Upon successful completion, students will receive a CERT pack of useful supplies and equipment. The program is run locally by community emergency management personnel, with financial support from local, regional and Massachusetts EMAs and is run within Federal EMA frameworks. Information : www.citizencorps.gov/cert or from Jim Barclay.

Royalston Cultural Council announces a whole year of great events for 2008-9!

The Royalston Cultural Council has been hard at work making grants to artists, musicians, puppeteers, theater groups, jugglers, and more, to bring our community a lineup of fun and lively events for the coming year. Mark your calendars NOW and participate in this varied set of performances and workshops. All events are free!!

December 4, 2008: The Village School will bring students to the **Hampstead Stage Company** performance of *A Christmas Carol* at the Shea Theater.

December 6, 2008 to April 3, 2009: **Open Mics** rock on, first Fridays of each month, 7-10pm. Come show off your talents on stage and enjoy home-made dinner fare and goodies provided by the Cultural Council.

December 31, 2008: **Starry, Starry Night** – 13th annual, free family celebration of New Year's Eve in downtown Orange.

January 17, 2009: **Pastel Workshop:** The Da Vinci Mode. Artist Gregory Maichack brings a fun, hands-on workshop to Town Hall (1pm to 3pm) to teach us great techniques for using pastels.

January 26, 2009: Performance of the **American Sampler** for ages 4-10 at Town Hall. Jeff Davis guides students to relive our nation's heritage through songs, clogging, banjo tunes, and more. (10:30am)

February 17, 2009: **Gerwick Puppets** perform the "Twig Family in the Oak Tree" for kids and families, 10am at the Phinehas S. Newton Library.

Wednesday, February 18, 2009: See, hear, touch live animals at the Town Hall, brought to you by **Southwick Zoo's Zoomobile** Eco-Education Program.

March, 2009: **John Porcino**, Storyteller and Musician, will entertain folks of all ages at a joint gathering of the schools and the Council on Aging at Town Hall.

April 17, 2009: Royalston Community School travels to **Theatre at the Mount** to see *Willy Wonka Jr.* for a morning performance.

June 6, 2009: Ellen Clegg, **Drummer with Found Sounds**, will lead a multi-instrument public drumming and workshop, to coincide with the Plant Sale/Bake Sale/Pancake Breakfast/Auction Day on the Royalston Common.

July 12, 2009: **Music Fest** happens in Bullock Park, Royalston, 12-5pm. Fabulous local talent, good food, activities for kids featuring **Henry the Juggler** to dazzle and amaze. The Massachusetts Cultural Council has awarded our local council a grant to make this year's party even bigger and better.

July 13-31, 2009: Athol Area YMCA – **YouthReach Summer Theater Arts Program**, a three-week experience in the performing arts for North Quabbin youth, ages 12-17. Kids invent and perform their own play.

September 17, 2009: The North Quabbin Garden Club sponsors a lecture on **invasive plant species** and your garden at 7pm, Millers River Environmental Center, by Peter Alden – world renowned naturalist and author.

All Year Long: The Royalston Cultural Council is delighted to help support the **Royalston Community Newsletter**, a phenomenal publication that brings all the news "right home" to you.

*Come on out and enjoy! If you have an idea for an event, please get in touch! The Cultural Council is always looking for new programs. Contact Elizabeth Farnsworth (978) 249-6771 * email efarnswo@mtholyoke.edu*



CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD NEWS

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

...And All the Children are Above Average

Academic Honor rolls

Athol High School; straight As: **Mackenzie Bennett** as well as **Natalie** and **Hillary Whitcomb**. All As and

Bs: **Sofia Brighenti, Chet Hall, Marissa Kellner, Christine and Ashley Sawyer, Kimberlee Thompson, Alyssa Bergquist, Catie Brighenti, Patrick Scribner, Kourtney Frazier, Ashley Guyer, Dylan Hall, Samantha Hutchins, Allison Bergquist, Ashley Butterworth, Francisco Carra, and Colby Easton.** *Naragansett High*: **Cady Boucher** received straight As.

Athol-Royalston Middle School: straight As: **Ashley Javier and Michele Thompson**; all As and Bs: **Sydni Ayers, Shelby Bronnes, Caleb Chase, Andrew Demboske, Garrett Hall, McKenzie Spear, Brandon Tisdale, Alexis Javier, Kayla Lusco, Joshua Roberts, Amber Simmington, Robert Javier, and Robert Reynolds**. All As and Bs with one C: **Stormy Easton, Tim Normandin, Michael Persson, Mike Campos, Gabe Jarvenpaa and Mary White.** *Royalston Community School (grades 4-6)*: Straight As: **Beau Guimond**. All As and Bs: **Rebecca Tetreault, Ann Reynolds, Alyana LaJoie, Olivia Kimball, Cassandra Frazier, Krista Boudreau, Charles Surett, Rhiannon Fletcher, Allisyn Mowrey, Karianna Tobias, Dahlia Wright, Thomas Bickford, Felicia Tourigny, Katelyn Robinson, Ryan Sawyer, Cody Nolette, Tiffany Lusco, Emily Mangum, Kadasia LaJoie and Tobey Chase.**

John and Abigail Adams scholarship recipients: Massachusetts awards tuition grants to state universities to students who score in the top 25 percent percent of their class on English and Math MCAS exams. Students must maintain a 3.0 average while in college. **Chet Hall, Kimberlee Thompson, Blue Otto and Marissa Kellner** recently qualified.

Royalston Community School October "High Five" awards: This program recognizes children who have shown qualities of good citizenship. "High Five" slips are given to children who demonstrate that they Care, are Cooperative, Assertive, and Responsible, have shown Self-control and Empathy toward their fellow students. Awards were recently presented to **Sophia Cassinari, Kyla Rathburn, Kyle Larcenaire, Justin Blake, Haylie Baker, Tayiah Neale, Mark Brighenti, Skyler Fortwengler, Kris Selanis, Matthew Davis, Collin Belliveau, James Laford, Anthony Divoll, Devontae Corbin, Bradley Ayers, Ava LeBlanc, Aliyah Neale, Brian Nano Jr., Julianne Trenga, Mandy Holden, Hannah York, Eden Marquis, Jack Sonnabend, Evan Blake, Sara Gibbons, Molly Divoll, Jonathan Hall, Cameron Brooks, Nicholas Vecchiarello, John Graham, and Denise Oro.**

Congratulations to the **Athol High varsity boys' soccer** team for an undefeated regular season. Royalston members include **Chet and Dylan Hall, Paco Carra, Steven Robinson, Pat Scribner, Dante Divoll and Kyle McCorquodale.**

Grantee: Lydia Jenkins Musco has been awarded a grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, established in 1985 to assist individual working artists of merit through the generosity of Lee Krasner (1908-1984), a leading abstract expressionist painter and widow of Jackson Pollock. Lydia is the Visiting Professor of Art 2008-2010 at Davidson College in Davidson, NC

Cover Cheesecake: two members of the Birch Hill Rangers Snowmobile Club, **Scot and Michael Caisse**, had their photo on the cover of the November issue of the *Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts (SAM) Magazine.*

60 years! Barbara and Enis Willhite celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on November 22.

Obituary

Irene E. (Gagne) Neale, 95, of New Boston Rd, died peacefully October 28, 2008 at home surrounded by loving family. She was born in Claremont NH, the daughter of Flora (Fuzzie) Gagne. She grew up in Gardner but had lived in Royalston for many years.



Irene worked at the Winchendon School and retired as the school's head of housekeeping. She previously had worked at Brockelman's Grocery in Gardner, the Royalston School system hot lunch program, Cloutier General Store in Royalston and Ray Plastics. She was one of the founding members of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Church. She enjoyed bowling and playing cards but mostly treasured time with her family.

Her husband of 63 years, Winston G. Neale, died in 2005. She leaves a son Duane A Neale and his wife Joyce; two grandchildren, Todd Neale and his wife Jill and Tricia Cummings and her husband Joe; and three great-grandchildren, Curtis Neale and Daniel and Hannah Cummings. She was predeceased by two brothers, Henry and Richard Gagne. Burial was in the Jonas Alliene Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to Our Lady Queen of Heaven Church/ 123 So. Royalston Rd./ South Royalston MA 01368.

Bells will ring; the sun will shine... Congrats to **Karen Rexroad** of N. Fitzwilliam Rd whose son **Steven Davidson** has recently become engaged to Paula Santillo of Newton. She is a special education teaching assistant and he is a provider specialist with the Tufts Health Plan. A June 2009 wedding is planned.

New Baby: **Kylie Alivia Nunes**, daughter of Brian Nunes of Virginia Beach, Va. and Jennifer Spoon of Jaffrey, NH, arrived on Monday, Nov. 17th at Monadnock Hospital. She weighed in at 7 lbs. 3 oz. and was 20" long. Proud grandparents are Deb & Joe Nunes of Royalston, and Becky and Kirk Daly of Jaffrey. After the holidays, Jen and Kylie will be joining Brian in Virginia Beach, where he is stationed with the US Navy.



Military News: **Deb Nunes** recently had the incredible opportunity to fly to Hawaii, board the nuclear aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, and sail back to San Diego with 5,000 sailors and 1,100 family members for the last leg of their 7 month deployment. The enormity of this ship and the logistics involved in its operation are almost impossible to describe. Imagine a floating airport/city, 4 1/2 acres of flight deck, longer than 3 football fields! The sailors had been in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman providing air support for our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. I have many fabulous pictures I am willing to share. The Nunes boys' current addresses are: AMEAN Nunes/ Brian K. VFA-34, Hangar 111/NAS Oceana, VA 23456 and Sgt. Nunes, Kevin R./ 139th MP Co./ Ft. Stewart, GA 31314



Community School News

Upcoming dates: 12/5 Toy Bingo, 12/8 progress reports; 12/16 school holiday concert; 12/19 parent time out/ babysitting afternoon from 3 - 8:00pm (if there's enough interest); 12/22/08 - 1/5/09 holiday break; 1/19 No school - MLK Day; 1/20 - no school professional development day; 1/16 marks close.

RCS enjoys three enrichment grants in Dec. - Jan: First, thanks to a grant from the Royalston Academy, a section of the **Thayer Symphony** will perform at the school and answer questions about its instruments and the careers of its professional musicians. Secondly, with funds from A-REF and Royalston Academy, all classes will enjoy instruction in Zumba, (high energy, aerobic dancing to a rumba-esque beat), once a week for 6 weeks during gym class beginning January. It will be taught by Kristen Killay, Zumba instructor at the Clark YMCA. Also, after-school at 3 pm on Tuesdays in the RCS gym, there will be **free weekly public Zumba classes for adults and families** who want to dance off some of their holiday stuffing. An evening performance will be held on Thursday, February 12 to show off new community-wide Zumba talents. Lastly, Adams Farm of Athol recently donated a \$100 meat package to be raffled in January to help defray bus costs for the **all school trip to the Boston Museum of Science** on 1/16; the museum is offering free admission. Call the school for information about these events: 249-2900.

Season of Giving: Easy as ABC at RCS

a. **Donate a book** this holiday to the Royalston Community School library. A wish list of requested titles and prices is available at the school office or on-line at arrsd.org. Donors' generosity will be noted on a book plate on the inside cover, which makes a nice gift for someone who loves the thought of children reading; a small handsome acknowledgement card is available.

b. **Toy drive:** the RCS community is seeking small monetary donations to be used to buy a few toys for students at our school in financial need this holiday.

c. **The Heifer Project** is an international aid organization that RCS students, spearheaded by the 2nd and 6th grades, have chosen to support. It fights world hunger by providing farmers in Africa, Asia and South America with high quality livestock and training; breeding these animals can provide food and income for generations. All RCS students are encouraged to participate by earning one dollar at home to donate to this cause. As a way to teach generosity, the parent teacher group will match these donations up to \$145, the # of children in the school. **Community members who would like to participate can donate in the cans at the town library and post office and So. Royalston store.** All money raised will be donated to the project.

Pictured left to right: Abby Roberts, Olivia Parnanen, Anthony Oro, Tayiah Neale and Jocelyn Trenga.



Village School

Upcoming dates:

Dec. 4 2nd-6th grades go to a live performance of *A Christmas Carol* at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls. George is reading it aloud to the children before they go, doing all the accents and making it come alive. This will be great inspiration for the play writing and performing that the children do in spring. The tickets are funded through a PASS grant from the Royalston Cultural Council, and the bus is paid by a Big Yellow School Bus grant, through a partnership between Bank of America and Mass. Cultural Council.

Dec. 19 Half day. 11 a.m. Holiday Celebration at the Town Hall. The children sing and play recorder, followed by a pot luck.

Feb. 5 Literacy Night 7 p.m. Come hear how literacy (reading and writing and more) is taught effectively and see how it spirals through all the classrooms. Find out why Village School kids love to read.

Feb. 7 Open House 10-12. Meet the teachers, present parents, and alumni. There are fun projects for kids to do in all the classrooms. At the end, we will all join in an entertaining All School Sing, just like we do every Monday morning.

End of year donations: The Village School is an independent elementary school serving preschool through the 6th grade, igniting learning through hands on experience, kindness and the great outdoors. You can give to the Annual Fund, or to the Capital Campaign for the new school building at Camp Caravan. Send to P.O. Box 122 Royalston. For more information, go to www.villageschool.to

50/50 raffle to fund class trip to England: The Village School 4-6th grade is holding a 50/50 raffle to help fund a class trip to England. Tickets are \$1 for one ticket and \$5 for 6 tickets. The drawing will take place January 30, 2009. Tickets can be purchased at the school. This year the 4-6th grade is studying the Medieval times. What better way to learn than to experience castles and cathedrals first hand. Thank you in advance for your support.

High Marks for Monty Tech

In addition to the fact Monty Tech achieved the necessary Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) markers for MCAS, statewide results place Monty Tech among the top performing voc-tech schools. Monty Tech comes in third in mathematics, sixth in English language arts, and an incredible fourth in the newly-mandated science test, which for Monty Tech is the biology focus.

Did you know Monty Tech has its very own ambulance?! Well, sort of. Med-Star of Leominster graciously donated an ambulance body that was no longer serviceable. It was sliced into two, brought into the building through a window, reassembled and refurbished by various Monty Tech shop students, and is now a training "tool" for students in the Health Occupations program. Monty Tech has plans to add an EMT training component to Health Occupations, and the after hours division is considering adding EMT as an evening course. In addition, a "Sim Man" training dummy, purchased through a grant, has been added to the program. This is a leading-edge, computerized "victim" that offers students opportunities to listen to heart, breath and bowel sounds, run EKGs, introduce urinary catheters and start intravenous lines.

Hands-On Pastel Art Workshop

Come spend a lively winter afternoon with renowned artist, Gregory Maichack. Learn how to apply Leonardo da Vinci's working methods to create your own pastel painting. Gregory Maichack will individually demonstrate the essentials of painting with pastels and display his original pastel artwork to illustrate da Vinci's concepts. He shows how to achieve luminous color and volume, how to structure an engaging composition, and offers tips on creating impact the Leonardo way.

Mr. Maichack teaches art at Holyoke and Greenfield Community Colleges. Featured in many national juried shows, his still lifes, portraits and landscapes are represented by galleries from Maine to California.

The workshop will take place on Sat. 1/17 from 1 -3 pm upstairs at Town Hall. The class is free, and all materials are supplied. Limited to 20 participants, first-come, first-served. Pre-registration is recommended; contact Elizabeth Farnsworth (978-249-6771 or efarnsw@mtholyoke.edu). This project is supported in part from a grant from the Royalston Cultural Council, which is supported by the state Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Ladies' Benevolent Society

November was a busy month for the members of the LBS. The Election Day Bake Sale in precincts 1 and 2 brought in nearly \$600 to be used for scholarships and grants. The 75 percent voter turnout certainly played a part but so too did the extraordinary participation of cooks and bakers.

In addition, a "Taste of Royalston" Basket Raffle concluded. Generous donors provided \$500 worth of goods and certificates. Tom Bush-ee, who co-owns the Royalston General Store with wife Pat, won back his donation of a tee shirt and free pizza certificate, along with all of the other goodies. Proceeds from the fundraiser, \$675, are helping the LBS meet its commitment to the Village School Capital Campaign.

The LBS' largest single fundraiser of the year is generally the annual Braised Beef Supper. The dinner was a spectacular sellout and left the crowd wanting to reserve seats for the 2009 dinner. Special thanks to Brenda L. Putney for serving over a decade as supper chairwoman.

Wednesday, December 17 at 7:30 the LBS will meet at the home of Theresa Quinn to enjoy key lime pie and pack holiday baskets for elderly residents. If you know of someone who would appreciate a basket and a visit, please call Kristin West 249-5993. Also, donations of homemade goodies, small trinkets and practical items to fill the baskets are welcome.

United Way Dinner Raises \$1400

The 2nd annual Athol-Area United Way Spaghetti Supper at Pete & Henry's Restaurant was a success. A hundred or so diners enjoyed a fabulous meal and owners John and Terry Cloutier turned \$1400 over to the local U-Way. Pete & Henry's Restaurant suppliers, the employees who volunteered to work and even donated their tips, the Red Apple Farm, and of course, the customers all contributed.

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Rich DeMar

Birch Hill Rangers Snowmobile Club

Club members will be clearing trails this fall in anticipation of a snow filled winter. Snowmobile club members have obtained permission to pass on to some property owners land, but club members want to advise ATV owners to observe signs as some trails are for snowmobiles, hikers, dog sleds and cross country skiers only. The club has SAM (Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts) passes available at every meeting. Meetings are held at the Royalston Fish & Game Club at 7:30 p.m. on the 3rd Wednesday of the month now until April. Memberships in the Royalston Fish & Game Club are available at every meeting as well.

American Sampler Show

Jeff Davis will put on a 45 minute show, titled American Sampler, at the Town Hall on January 26, 2009 at 10:30am for ages 4-10. Jeff guides students to relive our nation's heritage through songs of the Revolutionary War, Appalachian clogging songs, sailors songs, American banjo tunes and more. Jeff accompanies himself on a myriad of instruments, and students join in the fun with found instruments such as bones and spoons. Jeff can help make history come alive, and what better place to do it than in the Town Hall on the historic common. Jeff Davis is a winner of the Parent's Choice Award. He is one of the foremost performers, interpreters and collectors of traditional American folk music. This program is funded by the Royalston Cultural Council through a grant to the Village School.

Congregational Churches News

Sue Vellieux

Tis the season for thanks & giving, caring & sharing, family & friends. May God's peace & joy light each home in our beloved community. In today's uncertainties with the weak economy and the increase of unemployment, may we learn to stand as a community and lean on one another.

On Dec. 24th. at the 2nd. Church there will be a Christmas Eve service starting at 6:30 pm. There will be Ministry of Music, and message. All are welcome.

Wednesday night bible study will be focusing on family and marriage based on biblical teachings. Held every Wed. night 7:00pm-8:30pm at South Church. All are welcome.

Sat. mornings 8:00-9:00am :Hour of Power continues to be a blessing to those who attend. Everyone is welcome.

From friends & family from the 1st. & 2nd. Congo churches, we wish to you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Luncheon Club & Council on Aging

The long, cold, dark winter months can be pretty lonely. The Royalston Luncheon Club offers a chance for anyone of any age to socialize in a warm building and enjoy a hot meal each Wednesday at the Royalston Town Hall. Decks of cards, cribbage boards, scrabble games and the like are welcome, or just come along for dinner without having to do the dishes. Call Betty Woodbury at 978-249-9656 by Monday to reserve a seat. The suggested donation for the meal is \$2/senior and \$2.50 for others. Local grocery stores often provide additional baked goods and produce, all free for the taking and as always, the socializing is plentiful and entertaining. In addition, there are monthly Chinese auctions, blood pressure clinics, distribution of Western Mass Food Bank 'brown bags,' and occasional entertainment or informative programs.

Wildlife Sightings and Soundings

This fall John Poor brought in a bromeliad that had spent the summer outside. One day he heard a small peep and discovered a **peeper** living happily in the plant. Every so often it calls, no doubt looking for other peepers who have experienced this sudden change of seasons.

Beautiful red fox

Howling under the full moon

Calling a fox friend

RCS poetry group one: Anthony, Molly, Tayiah, Aliyah, Zoila, Jessica, Isabelle, Hannah, Kevin, Krystal, Alexia, Ashley, Mathew, Emily, MacKenzie, Sadie, Maria

Classified Ads

“U-cut” firewood; \$50/ half ton pickup load. Easy access. Call Ted 249-6872.

Unemployed **Handyman** looking for work: No job too small. Call Steve at 978-973-2791

House Cleaning 4 hr for \$50.00. Please ask for Fran. Royalston resident. Home – 978-249-5696. Cell – 1-978-895-0817.

For Sale: **Hand Knit** – All Sizes – Mittens – Hats – Men’s Boot Socks – Baby Sets. Nice Christmas Gifts. Also: Free electric typewriter, needs ribbon. 978-249-4013.

Announcing Kitchen Sink Services: You need it, we can do it. Petsitting in your home or ours. Horse boarding. Exotic pet care. Housesitting. Shopping. Respite care for elders. Child care. Basic tutoring. Pies from scratch. Old photos digitized and organized. Home inventory for insurance. Convenient door to door transportation, handyman and concierge services, editing, photography, computer skills, etc. Ask and we (all 5 of us) will find a way. References upon request. Call KSS today! 978-249-3301. KitchenSinkServices@gmail.com. Gift certificates available for holiday giving.

Where to Shop Locally for the Holidays

Give away your neighbors’ talents. Call:

Sharon A. Harmon for her new chapbook of poetry, *Swimming With Cats*, published by Autumn Light Press, selling at a reduced price of \$6.00: 978-249-3040

Shirley Anderson for hand knit items: 978-249-4013

Bob ‘Grumpy’ Anthony for custom scrollwork: 978-249-2857

Joshua Morris-Siegel for leatherwork: 508-733-2243

Laurie Truehart for animal paintings and hand-carved wooden birds of prey and decoys: 978-249-3291

Helen Divoll for whittled wonders

Emily Putney for wreaths 978-249-7787.

There are obviously more local artisans selling wares in the area. If you’d like to be listed in the next newsletter, please contact the RCN.

In addition, don’t forget, the Royalston Country Store has gift certificates for take-out dinners as well as town-tapped maple syrup, t-shirts and hand-knits. The library has note cards, mugs, t-shirts, dvds of local interest, maps, books and more.

Garden Notes

22 November 2008

November has been a month of two faces, neither very November-like. The first seventeen days were moderate to sometimes balmy. The turnabout was abrupt, temperatures averaging fifteen degrees below normal, more akin to mid-January than mid-November. A seven-day forecast suggests it may be a week before we return to seasonable levels.

Fortunately, I took full advantage of the extended autumn, increasingly completing next spring’s chores. One of the first has always been to clean-up and enrich the asparagus and rhubarb patches. Not next year, mission accomplished, my spring-time preparations being reduced to scouting the area in search of the first shoots. The big fall harvest occurred just in the nick of time. Any root still in the ground (carrots, beets, rutabagas, and celeriac) was extracted; leeks were pulled and cabbages cut. I even went so far as to pick a final half-pint of raspberries, tedious though the task was. They weren’t, alas, particularly tasty. Remarkably, green remains: there are broccoli side shoots to harvest, brussels sprouts too small to pick, and kale. The salad greens and the culinary herbs persist, though clearly unhappy. It is time to take stock.

First, foremost, I made it through another year, apparently none the worse for wear. My enthusiasm for and dedication to the gardening lifestyle has not diminished since I first undertook it (behind a schoolhouse on West 21st Street in Manhattan) thirty-five years ago. There were some notable successes this season: onions and carrots performed as well as they have in years. Bumper crops of corn, beans, and sugar snap peas were consumed, frozen, and sold. There were no failures though beets, regardless of which of the eight plantings they grew from, remained small. Green, leafy things (spinach, chard, kale, and such) have performed better in the past but we lacked for none of them. Everything else fell in between. The household requires the purchase of no vegetables for the next twelve months.

A drawback to this eat-your-own-vegetable-and-no-other philosophy is the paucity of fresh greens for a substantial part of the year. Our fresh winter greens are cabbages and leeks, both more white than green, especially as winter progresses. In an attempt to minimize our green-free days, extra effort was made to extend the leafy vegetable season. Mid- to late August plantings of a variety of lettuces, spinach, and oriental greens have provided us (at least until five days ago) with fresh salad whenever desired. A small amount goes a long way. Six ounces of mixed greens more than satisfy the appetites of our five-adult household. Placing fish tanks over some of the plants have yielded striking results: the plants within were twice the size of the plants without and have shrugged off the current cold snap. It remains to be seen whether a harvest will resume.

There is a plant in the ground, roman chamomile. It is an herb by virtue of the fact that its flowers provide a tea. Except for the period when the flower stalks emerge, it appears as a neat fern-like ground cover, one of the first to green up in the spring and one of the last to die back in the fall. I find the aroma of the foliage, dare I say it, intoxicating, and any day I’m in the garden (which is most every day), I grab a handful and partake of that aroma. From simple minds come simple pleasures.

Larry Siegel

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Recipe of the Month

Fruit Cake Cockaigne

Mary Hoag of Prospect Hill offers this traditional recipe for the holidays. Mary grew up on a farm. She moved to town with friends, Denise and Jim Bennett, in 2000. According to Jim, "For us, it's living a dream."



1. Line 3 8 x 3 3/4" loaf pans with buttered parchment paper. Preheat oven to 300 degrees.

2. Sift 3 1/2 cups flour with 1 tsp baking powder. Mix another 1/2 cup of flour with fruit:

1 cup dried pomelo, *a very nice tasting but hard to find green peel. Mary has a source and will bring it to town with enough notice.*

1 cup dried cranberries 1/2 cup pecans, chopped
1/2 cup golden raisins 1 cup candied orange peel*
1 cup chopped pineapple rings* 1/2 cup currants

Mary specifies that "the quality of the cake depends on its fruit. Using the glycerin and corn syrup kind common in supermarkets won't yield this cake. This specified fruit is expensive but I only make the cake once a year. Try Blueberry Fields in Keene for most of the harder to find fruit ingredients. Variation is fine, but remember, the starred ingredients give the cake its flavor."

3. In a large bowl, cream 3/4 cup butter. Cream in 2 cups sugar. Beat in 5 eggs, one at a time. Add 1 tsp vanilla. Beat mixture until light.

4. Stir the flour mixture into the egg mixture. Fold in the floured fruit and nuts. Bake for +/- 75 minutes. Cool in pans. To store, put the completely cooled loaves in a baggie or wrap while still slightly warm in wine or brandy soaked linens. (Mary uses Courvoisier.)

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Friends of the Phinehas S. Newton Library
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