

THE ROYALSTON COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

April 2009



Volume XII, Issue III

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

April 1 Wednesday **All Fools' Day**
(Deadline for Design a T-shirt for the Music Fest sketches)

April 2 Thursday
3:30 pm **Friends of the Library Annual Meeting.** All welcome. Famous rhubarb squares served.

April 3 Friday
7 - 10 pm **Last Open Mic of the Season** at Town Hall. Come to listen or to take the stage. Free admission. Home-made dinner fare and goodies available for purchase.

April 4 Saturday
10 am **Annual Egg Hunt and Chocolate Molding** on Royalston Common. Bring a labeled container. Candy or monetary donations, dropped off at the store prior to the event, are welcome.

April 5 Sunday **Palm Sunday**

April 6 Monday
10 am - 8 pm **Annual Town Election**
2 pm - sell out LBS Bake Sales at each polling station

April 8 Wednesday
noon -7 pm **Kindergarten Registration** at the Athol-Royalston Middle School Library. To complete the registration process, parents need to bring with them: child's original birth certificate and child's immunization record. In addition, parents will be asked to complete the paperwork (about 30 minutes) and schedule a screening appointment. Questions? Call: 978-249-2415

April 9 Thursday **Passover begins**
10:56 am **Full Pink Moon**

7:30pm **Open meeting to discuss results of the Open Space and Recreation Survey** and to define the goals of the 2009-2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan at town hall. Hosted by the Open Space Committee. Everyone welcome.

April 10 Friday **Good Friday**
No classes at Monty Tech

April 11 Saturday **The River Rat Spectacular**

April 12 Sunday **Easter**

April 15 Wednesday
TBA **Monty Tech Superintendent's Dinner**

April 17 Friday
2 -4 and 7 -8 p.m. **The last chance to register new voters for the Annual Town Meeting** at the Town Clerk's Office

7 pm **Stone walls of Royalston** slide show with Larry Siegel at Town Hall.

April 19 Sunday **Orthodox Easter**

April 20 Monday **Patriot's Day observation:**
Post office and library closed. Schools on April Vacation all week

April 22 Wednesday **Earth Day**

April 23 Thursday
1:20 pm **Kite Flying Day** at the library. Bring a kite or use one of ours. All ages welcome. Famous kite cake. Free!

7 pm **Library Trustee Meeting** at the Library
11:23 p.m. **New Flower Moon**

April 24 Friday
7 pm **Poetry Evening** with Sharon Harmon and friends at Bruce's Browser, 1497 Main St., Athol. Feel free to bring a poem to share.

April 25 Saturday
9 a.m. - noon **Annual Town-wide Clean-up Day**
noon **Apres Clean-up Cookout** for volunteers in Bullock Park

April 26 Sunday
2 pm **Explore Beryl Hill Mine.** Meet at the library at 1:45 pm. All welcome. Dress for weather and a 1/2 mile hike. Bring containers for collecting, rock hammers and eye protection. Free. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

May 1 Friday
9 am **May Day Celebration** at the Village School with May pole and Morris dancers. Community encouraged to attend.

May 8 Friday
7 pm **Annual Town Meeting** at RCS
7 pm **A-REF Father-Daughter Dance**, watch for info in backpacks

May 9 Saturday
7 - 10 pm **Blues Night** at town hall featuring Melanie and the Blue Shots and Gurus of Blues. Dance, refreshments. Tickets \$5 -- Call Lorraine at 249-5151 to reserve. Sponsored by Royalston Cultural Council ; benefits town cultural events.

Board of Selectmen's Corner

Andy West

Thank You: Linda Alger and Andy West would like to thank Jon Hardie, who resigned from the Board recently, for the wisdom, energy, and dedication he contributed as Selectman for the past two years.

Ice Storm Cleanup: FEMA is helping with clean up costs from the December ice storm. The Town will be contracting to have the hanging branches cut and debris removed. Residents can help the process by lining brush along the roadside, well back from traffic.

The Override Question: Please vote on April 6. The Town is at a turning point. Costs have risen more than the annual 2.5% budget increases mandated by law. In recent years, we have used savings to pay for increased and unexpected costs. These increases, drastic State aid cuts, and near empty savings leave us little choice but to severely cut services.

We are constantly innovating and reinventing how the town operates. The Town is currently running well with a combination of paid and volunteer labor. Cuts have been made and are continuing. Still, the \$130,000 override will not even fund the same services as last year. Without the override, many services will be severely cut including DPW, Police, Fire, and Library. Please read the details in the enclosed flier.

Route 32 update: Our 75% design was submitted and we are now acting on comments returned by MassHighway. The biggest hurdle is cutting costs. Estimates for this project have risen to \$4.8M (using the prescribed estimating formulas from MassHighway). Remember that we "stumbled" into \$3.88M because another project was not ready. How do we make the two numbers meet? We are trying to find areas that we can cut cost and refine estimates, not cut the scope. MassHighway will have the final say. We are still on target for advertising the project out to bid in late August.

Some Tidbits of Tax History Relevant to the Override

Kathy Morris

The average single family tax bill in Massachusetts was \$4,110 in 2007-2008. The average in Royalston was \$1,830. Royalston has one of the lowest tax rates and taxes in the State. Most towns the size of Royalston expend over \$2,000,000 per year (according to the DOR website; At a Glance Report.)

In 1982 when proposition 2 1/2 went into effect Royalston's share of the Athol-Royalston Regional School District was \$29,000 compared to the proposed \$403,000 for this coming year a 13.9 fold increase. (In 1982 the State subsidized most of the school system's budget.)

Due to the large subsidy of the School District's budget by the State at the time Proposition 2 1/2 was implemented, Royalston's initial budget limit was artificially low. Now that the State is no longer subsidizing the District at such a high level, the proportion of money that the town has to expend on the School is far greater than it was. Thus the amount Royalston can expend on other services has decreased significantly due to the levy limit imposed by Proposition 2 1/2.

News from the Open Space Committee

Aaron Ellison, chair

The survey results are in, and the Open Space Committee is ready to share the findings with the community and incorporate them into its new Open Space & Recreation Plan. This Plan will establish goals and objectives that will guide the Town's decisions about land use, open space, and recreation for the next five years. Having an Open Space & Recreation Plan also allows us to qualify for certain federal and state funding for the purchase and protection of land designated for recreation or open space.

The Open Space Committee will host two open meetings on the new Open Space & Recreation Plan. The first meeting will be on Thursday, April 9 at 7:30pm in Town Hall. At this meeting, we will present the results of the survey and work with everyone who attends the meeting to define the goals and objectives for the Plan.

The second meeting will be on Thursday, May 14 at 7:30pm in Town Hall. At this second meeting, we will finalize the goals and objectives for the Plan and present a draft version of the plan for public comment. After May 14, the draft version of the Plan will be available for a month at the Library and on the web so that townspeople who can't make these meetings can provide further comments. The final version of the Plan will be presented to the Board of Selectmen by the end of June.

Board of Health News

So, what's up with pizza boxes? Pizza boxes in themselves are totally recyclable. It's the remaining food and grease that's a problem in the making of paper. Food and grease contaminants really mess up the paper making process. Once in the process, it's hard to get out. It creates spots and breaks in new paper. It can cost the processor a lot in loss of product. So, what to do? If you have a pizza or food container, remove it and put it in the compost. Usually, there is a paper that collects most of it. If the bottom of the box is full of grease, tear it off the remaining clean cardboard. Recycle this portion. The more the recycler does to prevent this contamination, the less money lost later in the process.

With the budget deficit looming large for the next fiscal year, the BOH has been considering several areas to cut costs. One potential area if the override fails, is to close on Friday. We would then only be open on Saturdays. We are considering increasing the trash sticker fees, but would consider this after cutting hours. We are also considering cutting staff time.

Put on your calendar, September 26, haz/mat collection day. Also, April 25 for Checkpoint Charlie's annual town wide clean up.

Royalston Roadside Clean-up

Saturday April 25, 2009 - 9:00 to 1:00

Bullock Park

Friends and families in Royalston are invited to join a community service project. Help keep Royalston beautiful and clean of litter. Join Charlie Scribner at "Checkpoint Charlie", Bullock Park, behind the post office. Collect roadside litter in your neighborhood and join others to help pick up litter on Royalston roads. Following the clean up, there will be a cookout of hotdogs and chili. Contact Charlie at 978-249-2649 for more information.

Town Clerk News

Melanie Mangum, Town Clerk

A note regarding upcoming elections:

There has been some confusion about the recent vacancy on the Board of Selectmen and when that vacancy will be voted on. Due to timing, the vacant seat on the board will NOT appear on the Annual Town Election ballot April 6. A special election to fill that seat will be held in June. (see details below). There is only one selectmen's seat on the Annual Election Ballot, for a term of 3 years.

Annual Town Election – April 6:

Polls open 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., South Royalston.

With the exception of two Athol seats to the Athol Royalston Regional School Committee, there are no contested seats on this year's ballot. There is one question on the ballot, asking voters whether or not to approve an additional \$130,000 in real estate and personal property taxes, for the purpose of funding the operating budget of the public schools and the municipal government for FY09.

The following seats/candidates are on the Annual Town Election ballot:

Selectman – 3 years – Linda Alger; Planning Board – 5 years – Charles Longworth; Moderator – 3 years – George Northrop; Board of Health – 3 years – Eugene Kolimaga; Cemetery Commission – 3 years – John McClure; Constable – 3 years – John Chencharik; Sewer Commission – 3 years – Gary Winitzer; Library Trustee – 3 years – Barbara Guiney; Board of Public Welfare – 3 years – Mary Barclay; ARRSD Royalston member – 3 years – Bobbi Newman; Trustees of the J.N. Bartlett Fund – one year – Mary Barclay, Roland Hamel, Roy Smith, Jr.; ARRSD School Committee – Athol seats – 3 years (Two seats only) Mary Forristall, William Caldwell, Steven Kaczmarczyk, Deborah Kuzmeskas.

Positions on the ballot with no candidates: Board of Public Welfare – 2 years; Tree Warden – 3 years; Assessor – 3 years; one term of one year on the Bartlett Fund.

Special Election – June 15:

This special election will be held to fill the remaining term of one year for the vacant seat on the Board of Selectmen. The following deadline dates apply:

Beginning April 7, Nomination papers will be available.

April 24 – Last day to obtain nomination papers.

April 27 – Last day to submit nomination papers with signatures to Town Clerk's office.

May 13 – Last day to object or withdraw

May 26 – Special voter registration session.

Annual Town Meeting – May 8

The last day to register new voters for the Annual Town Meeting is Friday, April 17. A voter registration session will be held at the Town Clerk's Office from 2-4 p.m. and 7-8 p.m.

Brush Burning and Smoke Detectors

Keith Newton, Fire Chief



This month I hope to pass along some important advice on Fire Department burning permits. To continue "safe open burning" I would like to remind all using fire as a method of brush removal and spring cleanup to keep a safe distance, a minimum of 75 feet, from any building or dwelling. This also applies to roadways as sometimes smoke can be a traffic hazard and must be controlled. Be careful in choosing your area to build a brush pile; you will save yourself lots of

grief. Thank you to all that treat this privilege to burn seriously because, after all, fire is a serious thing.

Spring reminder to all residents: you should change your batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. I can't emphasize just how much of a "life saving" tool that these two items have become. This past January in early morning hours, we had a chimney fire in a home on North East Fitzwilliam Road. The fire extended into the wall and ran up inside the frame. With everyone asleep in the house, the alarms activated and alerted the residents of a very dangerous condition. I know that we avoided a tragedy thanks to a simple smoke alarm that worked.

A Request from the DPW

Mud has returned!!!!!! Please be cool!!! It will be gone soon and we will all remember why we live here in Royalston... for our beautiful country setting.

Royalston Emergency Management Agency

Jim Barclay, EMD 978-249-2904

Congratulations to Nell Vaughn and Phil Mickey of Bliss Hill Road, who have completed the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training sponsored by the Gardner Office of Emergency Management, and received certificates for successfully completing the American Red Cross' eight-hour Shelter Management Course and community CPR. The pair learned how to prepare themselves for a 72 hour period of time, the average amount of time it takes to mobilize outside assistance in a major emergency. They also took classes on disaster response, disaster medical services, search and rescue, small fire suppression, shelter operations, and disaster psychology.

The Royalston Emergency Management Agency is planning to offer the CERT training in cooperation with Winchendon, and possibly other adjoining towns. Free emergency packs with basic tools and supplies will be provided to the first 20 participants. Individuals and families are encouraged to participate. For additional information or to be included on the interest list, please contact Jim at ema@royalston-ma.gov or 978-249-2904.

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

Recent Donations to the Friends

Vyto and Pat Andreliunas - *thank you*

Thank you

Cadie Boucher for continued help with weeding

John Chencharik for a book

Elizabeth Farnsworth, Maba Cauthen and Melanie Kamayou for informative and delicious Cross Culture Club presentations.

Werner Bundschuh for clearing the brush from the library garden.

Kate Collins and Rebecca Krause-Hardie for sharing slides, sounds and stories from their trips to Nepal.

Kathy Chencharik, Ruth McCarty, and Norma Burrows for giving us insights, hints and ideas on how to write mysteries.

Friends of the Library members for helping with the programs and donating delicious baked goods.

the RCS 2nd grade for its stories and illustrations of the December '08 ice storm. These are available for perusal at the library and will be archived as part of our town's history.

Beginning Computer Classes

As many residents have discovered, most job applications are now done online and applicants are required to have an email address. If you need to learn to use a computer, search the internet, set up an email account, and other basic techniques, the library will be offering basic computer classes. These free classes will be limited in size and be held in the library at a convenient time for the participants. To sign up, please call the library during regular hours. For those just needing to check email, search the internet, and/or type a resume, call the library to reserve a specific time slot on one of the public access computers or just stop by to see if one is available for use.

Free proofreading services for resumes and cover-letters is also available at your library. Talk with any library staff member to set up an appointment.

Thank you to Nelson Tree Service, contracted by National Grid, who graciously trimmed and chipped broken branches around the common and pulled many broken branches (hangers) from the pine over the library parking spaces. Downed wood leftover from the ice storm and piled on town roadsides is now available for scavenging by residents.



Upcoming Library Events

Sponsored by the Friends of the Phinehas S Newton Library

Friday, April 17 at 7 pm:

Larry Siegel on Stone Walls

Larry Siegel, much praised author of our Garden Notes column, has spent his free time tramping over and mapping out the stone walls of Royalston in recent years. Come, enjoy a discussion/slideshow of his gleaning at town hall. Hear about location, form and function as well as the natural and local history of our stone walls. Refreshments served. Free.



Thursday, April 23 at 2 pm

Come, Fly a Kite

Celebrate spring's return with your fist holding tight to the string of a kite. The Friends of the Library's annual kite flying day is back. Bring a kite or borrow one of ours. Fabulous kite cake served. All ages welcome. Optionally, pen a poem of spring images to add to a kite's tail. Free.

Sunday, April 26 at 2 pm

Explore a Beryl Mine

Take a 1/2 mile hike to Royalston's famous beryl mine, source of the huge piece of aquamarine on display at Boston's Museum of Science. Although participants are unlikely to find large gems, discovering small pieces of beryl among the feldspar, quartz and mica is not uncommon. With luck, the walk among the early spring flowers this day ought to precede the blooming of the blackflies about a week later. The mine is on private land, and the Friends of the Library would like to thank the Chet Hall family for allowing this visit. Dress appropriately for brief outdoor adventure and bring collection containers, rock hammers and eye protection. All ages welcome. Meet at the library at 1:45. (If the weather is uncooperative, please call the library 249-3572 and listen to the message to hear if there is a Plan B or not.) Children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult.

Resident Recommended Reading

Read anything good lately? Pass it on. Write a brief review and send it along to the RCS. (Contact information is on p.12.)

Unless, by Carol Shields is the story of a writer and her family who are faced with an event that turns their "normal, happy" life upside down. The author proffers brilliant observations of the dual life that we all lead in our ordinary existence: the public and the private. Ms. Shields' writing is beautiful; her language evocative, similar at times to onomatopoeia.

Alyce Mayo

Some of the New Books at the Library

New Adult Fiction March 2009

Atwood, Margaret *Good Bones and Simple Murders*
 Beagle, Peter *We Never Talk About My Brother*
 Beaton, M.C. *Death of a Witch*
 Binchy, Maeve *Heart and Soul*
 Bowen, Rhys *In a Gilded Cage*
 Chamberlain, Diane *The Secret Life of CeeCee Wilkes*
 Cherryh, C.J. *Regenesis*
 Cussler, Clive *Corsair: A Novel of the Oregon Flies*
 Fielding, Joy *Still Life*
 Lent, Jeffery *After You're Gone*
 Lippman, Laura *Life Sentences*
 Lutz, Lisa *Revenge of the Spellmans*
 Malliet, G.M. *Death and the Lit Chick*
 Mosley, Walter *The Long Fall*
 Palmer, Michael *The Second Opinion*
 Parker, Robert B. *Night and Day*
 Patterson, James *Max*
 Perry, Anne *Execution Dock*
 Opper, Kenneth *Starclimber*
 Picoult, Jodi *Handle with Care*
 Robards, Karen *Pursuit*
 Robb, J.D. *Promises in Death*
 Stabenow, Dana *Whisper of the Blood*
 Steel, Danielle *One Day at a Time*
 Whitcomb, Christopher *Black*



New Adult Non-Fiction

Beletsky, Les *Bird Songs from Around the World*
 Hallinan, Joseph T. *Why We Make Mistakes*

New Young Adult Fiction

Blundell, Judy *What I Saw and How I Lied*
 Brashares, Ann *3 Willows*
 Marchetta, Melina *Jellicoe Road*
 Smith, L.J. *The Secret Circle*
 Smith, L.J. *The Secret Circle V.2*
 Smith, L.J. *The Vampire Diaries: The Return Nightfall*

New Young Adult Non-Fiction

Colbert, David *Michelle Obama: An American Story*
 Froud, Brian *Good Faeries/Bad Faeries*

Osborne, Mary Pope *Moonlight on the Magic Flute*
 Stewart, Paul *Return of the Emerald Skull*

Royalston in Summer: New Photo Contest

Win cash prizes and earn the esteem and envy of your neighbors. As the Phineas S. Newton Library prepares to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2010, the Friends group wants to record town life in the waning day's of its first century. Thus, it welcomes prints or digital photos depicting our fair Town taken between May 10 and Sept 10, 2009. The only rule is that all shots should be taken in Royalston. Everything is fair game: nature, people, architecture, or whatever strikes you (that is appropriate to a public library). Photos will be judged on technical quality and narrative meaning, which is the ability of the photo to evoke an emotion, tell a story or express a truth about life in our town. (If any picture is worth a 1000 words, a winning photo should tell a story worth at least 1001 words.) Photos will be judged by a panel of three local residents.

\$50 first prizes will be awarded in two categories:

amateur-all ages
 professional-all ages

In addition, winners can select a book on photography to be purchased by the Friends for the library's collection. Photos submitted will be displayed in the library, published in the Royalston Community Newsletter (space allowing), and posted on the library web-site.

New Children's Fiction

Cabot, Meg *Allie Finkle's Rules for Girls: Best Friends and Drama Queens*
 Fitzmaurice, Kathryn *The Year the Swallows Came Early*
 Gold, August *Thank You, God, for Everything*
 Hannigan, Katherine *Emmaline and the Bunny*
 Henkes, Kevin *Birds*
 Osborne, Mary Pope *Moonlight on the Magic Flute*
 Stewart, Paul *Return of the Emerald Skull*

New Children's Non-Fiction

Fleishman, Paul *Joyful Noises: Poems for Two Voices*
 Winter, Jonah *Who Ever Heard of Sandy Koufax?*

New Music CDs

Bocelli, Andrea *Under the Desert Sky*
 Creedence Clearwater Revival *Chronicle: The Greatest Hits*
 Grammy Nominees 2009
 iCarly *Music from and Inspired by the Hit TV Show*
 Nelson, Willie *Two Men with the Blues*
 Ramones *Greatest Hits*
 Santana *The Best of Santana*
 Sum 41 *Chuck*

New DVD's

Australia , *High School Musical 3: Senior Year, Love in the Time of Cholera, Madagascar Escape 2 Africa, Milk, Outsourced, The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2, Body of Lies, Changing, Twilight and Vicky Cristina Barcelona*

Local Music Scene



Open Mics

The last Royalston Open Mic will be Friday April 3 at Town Hall. Come to play music; come to listen; or come to chow down on the home-made goodies and supper foods prepared by the Cultural Council. Can't get enough? The next Athol Open Mics are set for Friday, April 17 and May 15, from 7:00 to 10:00 pm. (the third Friday of the month). Sign up for the performers will begin at 6:45 pm at Liberty Hall, located in the basement of the Athol Town Hall.

Linq's CD Release Party

Royalston-based singer/songwriter LINQ is pleased to announce the upcoming release of her latest CD, *Life Goes On*, and the buzz is happening! A CD Release Party will be held on Tuesday, April 14th, at 7PM in "the back corner" at Bruce's Browser, 1497 Main St, Athol. www.brucesbrowser.com or www.linqmusic.com Join an evening of music, refreshments, a viewing of Linq's music videos "*Diversity Dance*" and "*George Orwell Where Are You?*", and good conversation. There is no admission charge, but donations are appreciated.

Wooden Fender, a project of the Warwick Arts Council

The Young Musicians Showcase returns to the Warwick Town Hall on April 18, featuring solo and ensemble performances by talented high school students. Two performers from Orange return for this year's showcase: Hillary Chase, 16 and Nowell Closser, 17. New to the Showcase will be Senn Morimoto from Wendell, who also attends PVPA. Other musicians will be announced.

6:00pm -- Join the performers and your friends for a great Chili Dinner, featuring a variety of chilis (including vegetarian) and breads for a donation of \$6.

7:00pm -- The music starts upstairs. Suggested donation of \$5 to \$10 benefits future events.

Obsession Band at Corner Pub

The Obsession Band, featuring Royalston's Sandra Bruso (vocalist) and Ray Maillet (bassist) will be playing 8:30- 12:30 pm, April 18th at the Corner Pub, just under the train overpass in Athol on Sanders St. Come out and support the home-team.

Hermit's Castle Hike

Royalston resident and author Allen Young joins up with school-teacher and naturalist Clare Green to co-lead a hike on Sunday, April 19, 11 a.m.- 3 p.m., to Hermit's Castle in Erving. Hikers will follow the Metacomet-Monadnock trail and a spur trail to the cave where John Smith, a British-born hermit, lived in the latter half of the 19th century. The terrain ranges from easy to difficult, with a few steep stretches. Participants will meet at the Freight House Antiques parking lot, Route 2, Erving Center. Dress for the weather and with appropriate footwear. Bring lunch, water and whatever helps you enjoy the trail. Inclement weather cancels. Sponsored by the Athol Bird and Nature Club. Info: Clare Green, 978-544-7421, or Allen Young, 978-249-7612. To read about the Hermit's Castle and see photos, see pp. 143-146 of Young's book, "North of Quabbin Revisited."

Recipe of the Month

This month's kid-pleasing recipe comes from Dawn Dawson, new gal in town with an infectious laugh and June Cleaverish habit of having famously yummy home-baked goodies waiting for her four sons when they get off the school bus.



Dawn Dawson's Grandparents recipe for Bar-B-Que

To serve 4-6 (She also has the recipe to feed a whole church!) This can be made in a crock pot or stove top.

1 to 2 lbs of ground beef (browned) or morning star veggie crumbles (found in the freezer section)
chopped celery stalk (as much as you would like)
1 small onion chopped (more or less to your tasting)
1/4 cup of brown sugar (we like ours sweeter, so sometimes we use more)
1 bottle of ketchup (more or less for desired consistency)
a splash of vinegar and 1 or 2 bay leaves

Mix all ingredients together and cook until hot and onions and celery are done. (You can also cook them before mixing them in.) Spoon onto individual buns and serve with mac and cheese or baked beans. Goes well with your favorite salad.

RCS Poetry Club

The Easter bunny was late.
He came with his mate.
He forgot the confetti.
He knew he wasn't ready.
Being late was always his fate.

Krista Beaudreau



The Little Old Man

Once I saw 80-year-old Tom
who was walking with his
100-year-old mom.
She bickered,
"Look at your jacket.
Sew up that patch.
Make sure that your shirt and
underwear match.
At 101, she was finally calm.

Rebecca Tetreault



CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD NEWS

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

ARMS 8th grader, **Michele Thompson** of Laurel Lake Rd had straight A's last marking period. *Sorry, the RCN inadvertently left her off our list.*

Skyler Fortwengler, Chelsea Sanderson, Tobey Chase have been selected to have their work published in the Youth Edition of the *Gardner News*. Royalston Community School was among many in the region participating in the "Newspapers in Education Program". The contest included entries for editorial cartoons, advertising, opinion essays, and local photography.

At long last, **Arline Vining** returned home the end of March from Quabbin Valley Convalescent Center and Athol Memorial Hospital, where she had been "stuck" since just past Christmastime after several falls, and then a nasty stomach bug. Arline says anyone is welcome to visit – shortly after noon is a very good time for a chat and maybe a game of rummy.

Local hook to PBS premiere Tuesday, April 28, 2009 :

At Home in Utopia traces the history of 'The Coops,' a cooperative apartment complex built in the Bronx by Jewish garment workers. Royalston's **Boyd Estus** directed photography and **Damon Bundshuh** did the lighting.

Royalston Community Co-op: What could be better news than the alchemy of maple sap freely flowing in the newly bright spring sunshine and then concentrating into golden pancake-ready sweetness? Maple syrup producers from Royalston are invited to promote their products through the coop members' e-mail list. Contact mbarclay@juno.com or Mary at 978-249-2598.

In the Middle of Nowhere: "Showing Her the Town" By: Megan Wessels



ed note: Megan Wessels is a Royalston resident and attends MWCC, where she studies graphic design and is frequently published in the college newspaper.

Military News

Sgt. Kevin Nunes, son of Deb and Joe Nunes, recently deployed to Iraq for a year. He is stationed in Muqdadiyah, in Diyala province, training and overseeing Iraqi police forces. This area continues to be a insurgent hotspot, especially due to its proximity to Iran. Kevin would welcome mail from home. His e-mail address is: chipsahoy022886@yahoo.com



Unsung Heroes

I would like to offer sincere thanks to the men (I assume) who did the plowing of Route 32 during this winter. It was surely an unenviable task to move all that snow away from all those ruts and holes and heaves without smashing up their plows! I thought of them often and gratefully. *Dadgie Scott*



Obituary

Leona Y. (Ducharme) Charest, 91, resident of South Royalston for 54 years, died peacefully Sunday, March 8, in the Baldwinville Nursing Home, Baldwinville. Born in Gardner on June 9, 1917, she was the daughter of the late James and Cora (Thuot) Ducharme. Prior to retiring, Leona was an upholsterer employed by N.D. Cass Company of Athol, for 16 years. She attended Our Lady of the Holy Rosary School, Gardner. Leona was a founding member of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Chapel in South Royalston.

Leona's life centered around her family, friends, and church. She enjoyed cooking for family gatherings, playing cards with friends, and chatting with anyone she met. She loved children and was quick to engage them in conversation and play. A child could always bring a smile to Leona. All who knew her appreciated her thoughtfulness, sense of humor and gentle nature.

Leona was predeceased by her husband of 49 years, Paul H. Charest, who died in 1990. She leaves one son, Fred J. Charest and his wife Marsha of S. Royalston; four daughters, Jeanne G. Mallet and her husband Philip of West Boylston, Sandra C. Perkins and her husband Walter of Venice, Fla., Paulette L. Durkee and her husband James of Meredith, N.H. and Naomi C. Charest and her husband Michael Ciampa of Templeton; 12 grandchildren, Jill Donnelly, Nicole Curtin, Mara Racicot, Erik Perkins, Amy Salmon, Matthew Durkee, Leigh Hislop, Paul Charest, James Charest, Natasha Ciampa, Dominique Ciampa and Michael Ciampa; seven great-grandchildren; several nieces, nephews and cousins. She was predeceased by one brother, Hermas Ducharme and by two sisters, Alice Sands and Gertrude Antil.

Memorial contributions may be made to the House of Peace and Education, 20 Barthel Ave., Gardner, Mass. 01440.

Fire Department Breakfast a Success



The Royalston Fire and EMS Association would like to thank everyone for their continuing support and for making our recent breakfast a great success. We would like to thank the local community for generous donations, including Bear's Dairy Service for milk, Field Stone Press for printing posters, Barbara Guiney for poster design, Winchendon Rod & Gun Club for the use of the Club, Country Hen for eggs, Village Square restaurant for ordering food, Jayne and Larry Porter for use of their chafing dishes and Jim and Mary Barclay for use of their coffee maker.

We would also like to thank everyone for generous support in response to our recent fundraising letter. Your support helps to purchase equipment and supplies which enhance the services of the department. In addition to work uniforms we recently purchased three new portable radios which were beyond the reach of the town budget.

Ladies' Benevolent Society

Mary C Barclay, secretary

The "B" in Ladies' B. stood for BUSY in March! The March 14 corned beef dinner and pot'o'gold drawing was not without its glitches, but was declared successful by those who enjoyed the delicious meal, and was an especially exciting event for Mr. and Mrs. Larry Donovan of Orange, the winners of the \$100 in gold president dollars. Nearly \$650 in profit was made, all designated for the Society's \$6,000 commitment to the Village School Capital Campaign.

The Society also hosted Royalston's Blootalent show program Donor Day on Friday, March 20. There were reports of unbelievable numbers of walk-ins and waits of as long as two hours before giving, and a number of people who needed to reschedule to a later slot. When all was said and done, event chairman Donna L. Caisse reports that over 50 units were successfully collected. All enjoyed good food, good company and the good feeling that comes from giving the gift of life.

Congregational Churches News

Who can believe it's been one year since Pastor Jeff became the pastor of the 1st & 2nd Congregational Churches of Royalston? We are so blessed to have Pastor Jeff, Judi, Jamieson, & Jenna as part of our family. In the past year, we have seen the churches grow to where the congregation has tripled. We have seen many new ministries birthed, such as the Men's breakfast where for March's gathering there were 26 men. Also there is a monthly Women's fellowship, recently held at The Tea House in Orange; 15 women attended. We welcome and encourage all to join us. Call the 1st Congregational Church @ 978-249-9155 for future dates.

Revival Town Youth Group will be conducting services @ the 1st & 2nd Church including music, drama, ushering, greeting, testimonies, message; basically the youth are running the entire service from beginning to end. These youth are really catching the spirit.

The 1st. Congregational Church is excited about hosting the annual Easter Egg Hunt on April 4th at 10am. We would like to invite everyone young & old to come join the fun.

April 10th (Good Friday) the 1st Church will be showing "The Passion", directed by Mel Gibson, at 7pm. All are welcome. Come check out our new automated screen.

April 19th Easter Sunday services will be held at both Churches: 1st Congregational Church at 9am and 2nd. Congregational Church at 11am. We hope to see you there.

Plans are already under way for our annual fair. Hold onto your socks cuz it's gonna be the best one yet. There will be more booths, more games, more music, a chicken barbeque catered by Teen Challenge, homemade strawberry shortcake, a night concert by Crossfire, Dave's home made root beer, and much much more. God bless this wonderful town we live in.

Annual Egg Hunt and Chocolate Melting April 4 at 10 am on the Common

Pictured are a few of the Plummer girls engaged in molding melted chocolate into candy at last year's Easter Egg hunt. This year, the chocolate molding will be moved to the dining hall at the Congregational due to a conflict with another activity at the adjacent Town Hall. Egg Hunt organizer Rene' Lake-Gagliardi expressed her appreciation to the Church for opening its doors to the event, scheduled for



Saturday, April 4 at 10:00 AM. The hunt is held rain or shine; participants are urged to dress for the weather.

Kindergarten Registration Information

All Parents/Guardians of children in the Athol-Royalston Regional School District (towns of Athol and Royalston) who will be 5 years of age on or before September 1, 2009- need to register their children for Kindergarten for the Fall. Registration for incoming Kindergarten children for the 2009-2010 school year will take place on Wednesday, April 8th from 12:00-7:00 at the Athol-Royalston Middle School Library.

To complete the registration process, parents need to:

1. Bring child's original birth certificate and child's immunization record
2. complete the paperwork (about 30 minutes)
3. Schedule a screening appointment

Information about the Kindergarten program and screening will be provided at this time. If you have questions about Kindergarten registration, call Bobbie French, Kindergarten coordinator at 978-249-2415 (Riverbend).

Happenings at the Village School

The 4th-6th grade class visited **England and Wales** over February vacation. This was part of the class's theme study of the Middle Ages. The students visited castles, saw the Magna Carta, visited Stonehenge and London art museums, where they viewed the actual paintings they had previously been studying in class. Talk about history coming alive.....stop in the hallway at the school to read the children's detailed reports about the trip.

Biodiversity Day Tuesday April 28

Each class visits a local habitat and surveys the flora and fauna in that habitat. One class will go to Lawrence Brook, another class to a pond, and other classes will visit the woods. The classes visit the same habitats each year and make note of the species of plants and animals that they find. They record observations with drawings.

May Day Celebration Friday May 1

On Friday, 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 songs, and rounds, and 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. The public is invited. This event will last under an hour, just enough time to greet the spring and evade the black flies. The Village School is located in the old brick Raymond School building on Royalston common.

Friday May 22 7 pm. **An Original Play**, written and performed by the Village School Players at the Royalston Town Hall. This year's theme is the Middle Ages. Free to the public.

Saturday Morning on Royalston Common - Reserve the date June 6 from 7:30 to 11:00 a.m.

Athol High School News

Sheila Hall

There will be an After Prom Party Committee Meeting April 4 at 6:30 pm in room 214 at AHS. All parents of seniors are encouraged to attend and participate in planning the after prom party.

Also, support AHS by bringing your returnables to the **bottle and can drives** to benefit the senior class 2009 after prom party, and held on the first Saturday of every month in Athol Memorial Hospital parking lot near Larry's Meat Market.

Royalston Community School Update



Students in the first grade were recently honored with books of their choice for "Perfect Attendance". From left to right are Diego Garcia, Ashley Hadmack, Alexis Frechette, Principal, Mr. Vaidulas and Kevin O'Connor.

RCS Green Team:

The RCS Student Council has been encouraging recycling in the school and graphing the results since September. *Pictured: Board of Health chair, Phil Leger, gives council officers some tips on efficient ways to avoid waste, recycle resources and save energy.*



Important April Dates at RCS

*MCAS testing for grades three through six will occur during the weeks of March 30th through April 10th.

*River Rat Reading Race all April

April 6 - Spring Pictures and Marks Close - Third Quarter

April 7 - PTG meeting @ 3:15 pm

April 8 - 1/2 day, noon release, lunch served, No Kindergarten

Kindergarten Registration at ARMS in Library noon-7PM

April 10 - 1/2 day, noon release, lunch served, Kindergarten held.

April 13 - Scholastic Book Fair through April 16th

April 15 - "Family Evening at RCS" - Clay Night, where families work together to create ceramic projects, sponsored by A-REF. Also, the book fair is open for family shopping to benefit the RCS library.

April 17 REPORT CARDS, 3rd Quarter

Field trip to MWCC - "Willy Wonka, featuring Royalston's own Ben West as Mike Teavee.

April 20 - 24 *** SPRING BREAK***

Classifieds

Needed:

Egg Cartons: High Winds Farm in Royalston will be selling fresh eggs starting in May and would like your help in the collection of egg cartons. Phil Leger has been nice enough to set up a donation bin over at the recycling center. To encourage further recycling, anyone buying at least five dozen eggs from HWF using the same carton will receive the sixth dozen for free. Please call Sandie at 978-895-9145 or Randy at 978-602-5090 for further information.

One truck cap to fit a Ford F-150. Mine was a casualty of the ice storm, crushed under the limb of a pine tree. It need not be pretty and it would be fortunate if it was cheap. Call Larry 249-4260.

For sale:

Avon products on-line with local representative Carrie Hutchins. Call (978)895-1805 to learn how to visit her on-line store. (Black flies are coming; it's time to stock up on the skin-so-soft.)

Handmade Items: Easter bunnies, chicks and lambs with blankies, baby sweater sets, baby blankets, shawls, towels and dish clothes. Call Betty at 978-249-3119.

Hand knit baby sweater sets. \$12.00. Assorted colors and great shower gifts. Call Shirley Anderson, 978-249-4013.

Seasoned cordwood, cut and split. \$80/ half cord or \$150/ cord. Delivery available. Call Chet 249-2183.

Firewood, cut, split and delivered locally, unseasoned wood at \$170 for 170 cubic feet. Limited amounts of partially seasoned firewood; call Jim for details: 249-7787 or at Putney's Mill 249-3379.

Hughes HN7000S Satellite Modem and satellite dish and receiving arm, purchased October 2007, in garage/storage since May 2008. If you want to move up from Dial-up to high speed internet, but don't have access to cable or dsl, satellite is a reasonable option. This equipment was purchased new in 2007, used for 5 months, and then stored when DSL became available to us. Software for modem is internal to modem. Dish mounts on 2" pipe (not included). \$75 or best offer. Contact Aaron or Elizabeth at 249-6771.

Digital Stream Digital-to-analog television converter box (including manual, remote, and coaxial cable). Will convert digital TV signals to analog so you can still use pre-digital TV sets. \$10 or best offer. Contact Aaron or Elizabeth at 249-6771.

Services Available

Mariah Mallet, Notary Public and Justice of the Peace. Any wedding, anywhere. Call 978-249-9410.

Available for gigs: Melanie and the Blue Shots; see them at the Red Onion, Otter River Hotel June 12th. For booking info call Jim "the hat" Bennett @978-575-1052.

Have rotor tiller. Will travel. George Vaccari. 978 249 2280

Garden Notes

March 23, 2009

Unlike baseball, there is no official start to the gardening season. Unofficially though, I determine its onset when my knees hit the ground to perform some chore. I participated in this rite of spring on March 14, as I was uncovering some of the alliums (chives, perennial scallions, and garlic); just as well since each had begun new growth. I could have more easily accomplished the task upright with a rake, but I needed to accumulate some dirt under my fingernails to legitimize the rite. I moved on to the perennial culinary herbs, early risers all. The tarragon, thyme, oregano, and mints showed green. Alas, so did an assortment of perennial weeds and it was a tedious task to extract them from the beds of herbs.

Bright, sunny days notwithstanding, temperatures hovering in the 30s and low 40s do not make for an altogether pleasant working environment, but work I must. Ice storm clean-up continues. (Will it ever not?) Leaves are raked (didn't I do that last fall?), manure and bedding and uneaten hay stacked, and early crops attended to. Rhubarb appeared by mid-March. Interesting stuff, rhubarb: were it to ripen in August, I would pay it no attention. Why would I with blueberries and peaches and raspberries ripening at the same time? But the rhubarb becomes available in late May, when it competes with no other fruit. A (very) healthy dose of sweetener and it even becomes desirable.

The glossy catalogues from seed companies and nurseries provide the illusion that perennial flowers are rugged and carefree. Rugged they may be, carefree they are not; most die back to the ground, but the prior year's growth remains and it falls upon me to cut it all back and remove it from the beds. Since I favor aggressive, sturdy, tall perennials, there is a lot to cut and remove. Once accomplished I must deal with the influx of weeds which have appeared since last spring. Unlike the vegetables, I tend to weed these beds but once a year. I am not nearly as meticulous as I tend to be with the vegetables, but do make some effort to assure the continued dominance of the flowers.

The state of the garden: having mulched almost the entire garden I somehow neglected the spinach and strawberries. I was picking spinach late last fall and snow fell before I thought to do it. I have no excuse for the strawberries. Most of the spinach winter-killed and it remains to be seen how well the strawberries survived. From many covered with glass, two parsley and three lettuce plants remain alive, a result I consider to be somewhat less than a total success. An April reminder: as soon as your soil is workable, peas and spinach can be planted. They perform best in cool weather, you will assure yourself of some early harvests, and the plots they occupy can be planted with fall crops. Most important, you will get some dirt under your fingernails.

Finally, a touch of self-promotion. My much-delayed program on the stone walls of Royalston will occur on April 17 at 7:00 at the Town Hall. There will be slides, maps, and banter, as I share what I've been doing during off-season, and you'll get to meet up close that strange guy who's been lurking in your backyard.

Larry Siegel

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Wildlife sightings:

Two black bears were sighted mid-month ambling past Phil Leger's garage on their way down Taft Hill Rd.

Jes & Chris Willhite sent in this photo of a barred owl. Their children Matthew, Owen and Abigail spotted him in their North Fitzwilliam Road backyard a couple of weeks ago.



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