



Vol. 1 No. 5 December 1979

HEATH HERALD

CHRISTMAS IN HEATH REMEMBERED

25¢

1974

Snow covered the ground and the stars shone brightly on an evening just before our first Christmas Eve at Plover Hill.

I was preparing supper when suddenly I heard the joyous voices of Christmas carolers singing "Hark the Herald Angels Sing".

On going outside, Johnny and I were cheerfully greeted by a group of young people who were being driven from house to house by Carroll Stowe in one of his trucks.

We all sang several more carols together and then with a "Merry Christmas to you both" they were on their way.

We will always remember that happy surprise which made our first Christmas here in Heath all the more perfect.

Would that carolers could bring the true spirit of Christmas, so profoundly and so beautifully expressed in song, to every household across the land.

Harriet C. Read

1916

Santa had promised me a doll carriage and I wanted to see it before my folks woke up in the morning. So I decided to stay awake. I kept very quiet but missed Santa. Then, when the daylight began to dawn, I heard Carol singers approaching. They had spent the night walking and singing and were on their way home. I was thrilled because they stopped outside my bedroom window and I thought they were singing especially for me. Incidentally, I still have the wonderful doll carriage.

Edith Gleason



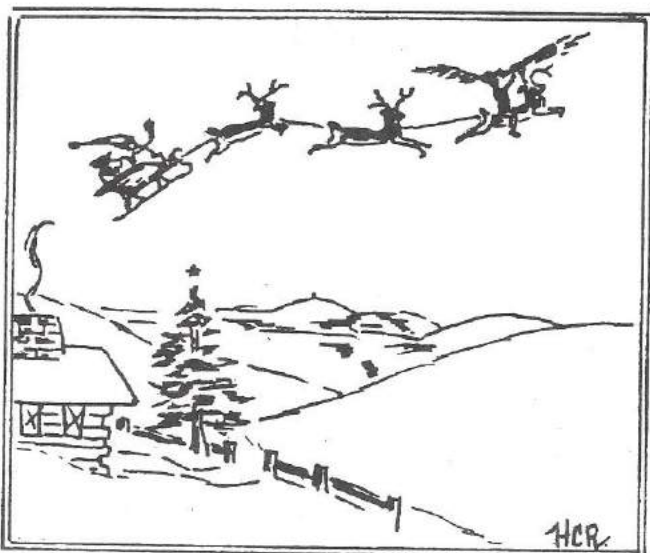
1900

When I was a boy Christmas Day was little or no different from any other day of the year in our house. We had very little money, and with my 11 brothers and sisters it did not go far. We had no Christmas tree and no gifts. For dinner we had the usual meal, a pig or a calf which had been slaughtered, pork being the most popular.

We had a brick oven in which the fire was made, then the coals were taken out and the food to be cooked was put in. As a boy, I was responsible for baking 12 loaves at a time in it. An orange was a rare treat.

We had to get up on Sunday at 5 AM to get to church in Griswoldville at 7 AM, but we did not go very often. This was a large Catholic parish but it had no Sunday School. There was no special celebration in the church at Christmas.

Andy Royer



HAVE YOURSELVES A MERRY MERRY CHRISTMAS!

LETTERS

To the Editors:

Another fantastic edition of "The Herald" has arrived. Speaking for some of us who are not able to be full time residents of Heath, we thank you. You are bringing to us an informative, interesting, and entertaining newspaper that gives us a feeling of being more of a part of our beloved community.

We look forward to each issue and truly appreciate all of the work that goes into each publication.

Keep up the good work! The HERALD is a long needed community communication in Heath.

CAROLYN LITCHFIELD



A FIRESIDE PUZZLE

If the B mt put :
If the B . putting :
Don't put : over a - der
You'd be an * it

Complements of the Fitzwilliam Inn
Fitzwilliam, N.H.

(answer in the Feb. Issue)



Volume 1 Number 5

December 1979

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NINE SCHOOLS IN HEATH

Did you realize that at one time the population of Heath was so large that it required nine schools to take care of the children - with no bussing! In 1830 there were 1199 inhabitants shown by the census.

The nine schools were:

- No. 1 South School (corner South & Bassett Rds.)
- No. 2 South West
- No. 3 South Center
- No. 4 South East (Burnt Hill)
- No. 5 North East (East Oxbow)
- No. 6 North Center (opposite Center Cemetery)
- No. 7 West Middle (Branch)
- No. 8 North School (Tucker place)
- No. 9 Number Nine (Number Nine Road)

Pearle T.

HEATH PRECIPITATION

By Ralph H. Dickinson, Observer
for Mass. Water Resources Commission

September 1979 5.51 inches
October 1979 4.87 inches
(including 2 inches of snow)
November 1979 3.97 inches
Total January - October 50.77 inches
Ave. annual for for past 12 yrs 52.36 in.
Maximum in past 12 yrs - 1975 - 65.62 in.
Minimum in past 12 yrs - 1970 - 41.17 in.

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LECTURES
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MINISTRY WITH THE DEAF

By Rev. Ann Geer

The Heath Union Church, together with the Rowe Community Church, sponsors a specialized ministry to the deaf. One aspect of that ministry is a Sign Language Choir composed of both hearing and deaf members which was founded two years ago by the Revs. Ann and John Geer. Hearing members of the choir had to learn sign language when the group started as did some who are deaf. Those deaf members came from an educational experience that emphasized speech and lip reading rather than signing. The deaf are very expressive with visual images and movement which form the basics for "choreography" used in signing songs.

The Sign Choir has performed extensively throughout New England and has frequently taken part in the worship services at the Heath Church. Recently the Church sponsored a ham dinner for the benefit of the deaf which netted over \$300 to go towards the purchase of a TTY (telephone for the deaf). The Choir will again perform at the Heath Church on Christmas eve.

STUDY OF HOLOCAUST BY HEATH THEOLOGIAN

Rev. Robert McAfee Brown, under a grant from the Lilley Endowment, is working on a book about the Jewish novelist, Elie Wiesel, a survivor of the death camp in Auschwitz. Wiesel is Chairman of the President's Commission on the Holocaust, and Dr. Brown is a member of that Commission. He with Wiesel travelled to Poland, Russia, and Israel this summer. The purpose of the Commission is to recommend to the President a suitable memorial to the Holocaust victims.

Dr. Brown will soon be leaving Heath to go to California where he will be Professor of Theology and Ethics at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkley.

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CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

By Ann Geer

The Heath Union Church will offer a community-wide Christmas Eve service of candlelight and carols at 8:30 P.M. The traditional service will include an ecumenical choir directed by Ruth Law, and a presentation by the Sign Choir. Since many deaf persons will attend, the service will also be interpreted in sign language.

All folks of Heath are cordially invited to attend and if you would like to join us for choir practice, call Mrs Law for rehearsal schedule.

The Advent services will start on December 2nd and continue for the next four Sundays at 11 A.M. The final advent service on December 23rd will include a nativity pageant presented by the Youth Group and Church School.

The Christmas trees which will be decorated by the Youth Group for our town's elderly and shut-in residents will be ready for distribution at that time.

Come with your friends and neighbors to celebrate this Christmas season at our community church.

CHURCH UPDATE

By Catherine Cromack

Members of the Church Community have been real busy earning money for the Parsonage Fund.

In October the Youth Group sponsored Dance-a-thon. Many of these energetic young people danced all night, and as a result they collected some \$200.

In November the Church sponsored a Sunday ham dinner and realized \$253 for the Fund.

We will not see any further progress on the parsonage for the winter months, but some of you have been asking about the strange structure outside the Church. That is not the parsonage! It is the beginning of the new steeple for the Church. The structure will be completed on the ground and when it is ready, a crane will arrive on the scene to remove the present steeple and put the new one in place.

Many thanks to all who have helped in any way to further these projects.

ALAN NICHOLS - HEATH ARTISAN

By Marlene Housner

Alan began to set up his wood working shop a year and a half ago. He is now making slat back chairs (with splint woven seats) from lumber cut and milled in the town of Heath. The wood is mainly coloured birch and hard maple with some ash. His designs include large armed rockers, three-slat side chairs, and high seated chairs (suitable as kitchen stools). Alan began working from measured drawings of Shaker furniture, but his chairs are not exact reproductions.

A rocker and two side chairs are currently on display at Artspace in Greenfield. He is also taking orders directly. Chairs may be viewed at his home in Heath, where he resides with his wife Catherine and their two children.

N.E. SMALL FARMER PROJECT

By Alli Thane

"Small farms in the United States have declined severely in number and the ones remaining may not last long under current pressures" was the opening statement of Vista Volunteer, Bev Cowdrick, at a meeting of area farmers at the Community Hall on November 29. Her program consisted of slides of many and varied small farms in New England and how to help prevent the small farms from failure. She and other volunteers are holding meetings with farmers and would-be farmers to instruct them on where to obtain information and assistance. She explained the Farmland Assessment Act, Chapter 61A (forms can be obtained from the Assessors) which in some cases will ease the farmer's tax burden.

She told of a group at the University of Massachusetts that is studying methods of growing local crops, such as corn and soy beans, in a shorter period of time to encourage more feed growing in the area. This is desirable because of the high freight rates to the Northeast and the limited available storage facilities.

There are grants available for assistance to small farms. Information on this can be obtained from Bev Cowdrick, Center for Rural Communities, 114 Draper Hall, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003 or phone at 413-545-0060.

NEW PAPER HITS THE STANDS

By now most of you have seen the "Shelburne Falls and West County News" published by Mike Bakalar. Unlike the HEATH HERALD, the News will be published every two weeks and is devoted to covering news and features in the entire western part of Franklin County.

Mike has been responsible for the advertizing in the HEATH HERALD, and we wish him well in his new venture.

HEATH AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

By Alli Thane

The Heath Agricultural Society met on November 15, 1979 at the Community Hall with 17 members present.

Edith Gleason, Assistant Secretary, submitted a letter of resignation which was accepted with regret.

Carl Croland, Treasurer, reported that because of large bills from the Police Department and the Youth Group who mowed around the building the Fair sustained a loss of \$366.40 rather than a gain. The savings account stands at \$547.45 and checking account at \$2202.52.

Ken Crowningshield, President, reported that the new caretakers of the Fairgrounds are the Briggs family of Vermont. He also reported that the large stone in front of the Fairground gate would be engraved with "Heath Agricultural Society-1916".

Election of offices was held and stands thus:

Ken Crowningshield-President
Carroll Stowe-Vice-President
Dorothy Scofield-Secretary
Marjorie Deardon-Assistant Secretary
Carl Croland-Treasurer
Grace Crowningshield-Assistant Treasurer
Fred Crowningshield, Luis Pazmino, Evelyn Hillman-Directors
Edith Royer-Historian

In closing, the President announced that there is still storage space available in the cattle sheds for farm equipment or trailers.

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PLANNING BOARD REPORT

By John Holdsworth

The Planning Board had reached an impasse in its work on a 5-year plan; however, stimulated by a discussion with Chuck Dauchy of the Soil Conservation Service, the Board hopes to present an outline of objectives at its December meeting. Conservation and recreation will be the particular subjects, but anyone with ideas on other items for a plan is welcome to come and speak. The Board also has on its December agenda a discussion of possible goals for the Town in the next calendar year.

Several months ago, the Franklin County Energy Conservation Task Force (FCECTF) contacted the Planning board to find out if Heath would be interested in receiving funds for studies on wind power generation. The Board allowed the Town might be. Now, Richards Steinbock, as unofficial representative from Heath to the FCECTF reports that applications are being received for funding of the initial phase of the program - purchase and location of anemometers. Steiny will make application for Heath. If it is approved, the Town might receive up to five anemometers. The Planning Board will consider possible locations at the December meeting. Suggestions will be welcomed.

Increased fuel costs have doubled private transportation costs in the last five years. Public transport offers no hope of providing a cheap alternative in the foreseeable future. Even if the Town voted to join the FRTA (Links) now, service would be several years away and the cost would be high. Gas prices may soon rise again because of both foreign and domestic developments. Carpooling may become the only feasible way for commuters to avoid bankruptcy. At the December meeting, the Planning Board will begin drawing up a list of Heathen commuters, their destinations, and usual hours of work. An effort will then be made to group compatible schedules. Interested individuals should attend the December meeting.

Next Planning Board meeting: Monday, December 10, 8PM, Community Hall.

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FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

By Chief Earl Gleason

The Fire Department received a generous donation recently from the Heath Grange for which they would like to express their appreciation. They would also like to thank people who gave donations for chimney cleaning.

Money donated to the Department goes to the Heath Firemen's Association. This is an organization made up of people interested in the Fire Department (not necessarily firemen) and the major functions are fund raising, promotion, and special projects. The major fund raising events are the roulette wheel at the Fair and Yankee Doodle Days.

Promotion of the Fire Department by the Association in recent years has been confined to the fire prevention program put on at the Rowe School. Perhaps an influx of new blood into the Association, and with it new ideas, would enhance this function.

Some of the projects which the Association has financed in the past are a new portable pump, half of a second one, and a 35 foot extension ladder. The tanker was built with Association funds with the exception of \$350 of town funds. The most recent project of the Association is the office, radio center, and meeting room added to the Fire Station.

The Association meets on the second Wednesday of each month at the firehouse, and is open to anyone who is interested. The dues are two dollars a year. Many of our activities take little time and we sure could use your expertise. A few hours of your time or donations are one way of cutting down on taxes too, since our Fire Department budget would have to be increased by 40% to 50% to cover things the Association provides.



BARTLETT'S

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SELECTMEN'S REPORT

By First Selectman Ken Cole

As of November 19, the town has engaged the services of the Public Records Survey and Inventory Project, sponsored by the State Division of Public Records and funded through the CETA Consortium of Greenfield. The project also operates under a separate grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission for the employment of a professional advisor and coordinator to direct field and office operations. Their goal is to inventory all records, with special attention given to potentially historical records and papers. Records are identified and retention periods determined according to Disposition Schedules of the State Division of Public Records. They will make recommendations on more efficient methods of organization of records such as chronological or alphabetical file organization, better preservation and regular cleaning of expired records, etc.

The project comes at a good time, such that the town's records will be reorganized for transfer to Sawyer Hall and a new filing system. It also should prove beneficial to the By-Laws Committee in hopefully turning up related material to the town's by-laws.

The project is being coordinated by Pegge Howland, and it is without cost to the town.

A petition, signed by over 80 voters of the Town, was presented to the Selectmen at their meeting on October 24th, asking for a public meeting with Whiteman Brothers, the contractors for Sawyer Hall. Such a meeting was held on October 31st and was attended by several Town residents. A completion date of December 1, 1979 was established and agreed upon by Whiteman Brothers. In subsequent discussion with the contractors, they say they will meet that schedule with no difficulty.

KAYEN'S

JEWELERS

220 Main Street Greenfield, Mass.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Town Finance Committee members have been attending this fall the weekly meetings of the Mohawk School budget sub-committee and the Franklin County Technical School budget committee. It is expected that the recommendations of these budget committees will be made in December and, after public hearings in January, will be voted on by the full committees. In case of an increase over the 104 % "tax cap", as seems to be the case at Mohawk, a 4/5 vote of the full school committee will be required (Heath has one vote out of 15 on this committee). At the moment, it appears that the proposed Mohawk operations budget will be up substantially. This with an expected decrease in aid and a reduced surplus available, could cause an increase in the Town school assessment of 20 % more than last year.

On November 14th the Finance Committee held a joint meeting with the Selectmen. The report of the Town Treasurer covering the first quarter of the fiscal year was reviewed. All of the Town expenditures for this period were in line with the budget. Since there has been a delay in finalizing the new tax rate, it appears that the Town will need to borrow funds again this year for at least three months. It was recommended that the tax payments be accepted by the Tax Collector, based on last year's bills, from those who wish to do so before the end of the year.

The Heath Finance Committee will ask for budget requests from all Town Departments in January, so that the FY 81 budget may be completed in March.

ASSESSORS REPORT

It looks as though the tax bills will not be out until sometime after December 1 (but before New Year's). Re-evaluation is taking more time than was originally expected.

In order to keep the Town from borrowing heavily in anticipation of revenue, anyone wishing to pay his taxes before January 1 may do so. If you pay one half of last year's bill, the payment should be close to what this year's first payment is expected to be. Any payment made before the bills come out will be deducted from this year's total tax to determine the balance still due.

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COUNTY ENERGY TASK FORCE

By Richards Steinbock

I am currently the Heath representative to the County Energy Task Force. Franklin County has been lauded by such diverse people as Ronald Reagan and Ralph Nadar as the vanguard of alternative energy in the country.

Heath is considered a prime spot for wind power generation. The Task Force is currently looking for places to put up several anemometers (to test wind speed, patterns, duration). At this point the delay is being caused by lack of funding. If the money comes through, we can expect to see several 60 foot towers in Town.

In a meeting with the Planning Board last month, we discussed the following:

- Hydroelectric power is not feasible in Town with one or two exceptions.
- Wind power is a good possibility. Anyone who has a good windy spot, and who would n't mind the towers can give me a call.
- We seem to be doing about all we can with regards to wood heat for homes. Most everyone in Town uses wood as a primary source of heat, and the town wood dealers seem to be doing a brisk business. Cordwood and lumber are one of Heath's most abundant resources. We might want to consider some kind of master plan for its management. Anyone who is not heating with wood and who would like to do so, or who is buying wood from an out of town source, should call me. There is no reason why our home heating energy dollars should leave town.
- Mass transit (this is discussed in John Holdsworth's report.)
- Recycling at the dump could help to pay for some of the operating costs. According to the Planning Board, the Charlemont Selectmen have not been in favor of it. I plan to meet with the Charlemont Task Force representative to see what can be done.
- Food. Heath could be self-sufficient in vegetables, meat, eggs, and milk. What can we do towards this end?

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Anyone with ideas on saving energy and on keeping energy dollars in Town is asked to call me. The same goes for anyone who has some new energy project in mind but who lack the funds or know-how. Through the Task Force, I can get the funding and technology.

The cost of energy for everything - heating, transportation, freight, etc.- is going to get higher. We ought to do everything we can to conserve that energy and keep our money in Town for other things

LIBRARY NOTES

By Edith Gleason

Progress is now being made! All the books and furniture have been moved back into Sawyer Hall and are being put back on the shelves. If anyone has a spare afternoon, please call the Librarian at 4948 as volunteer help can be used. However, until further notice, the library will be closed for public use to allow for this work.

On November 17th the first scheduled Library film was shown at the Community Hall. The following films are scheduled for showing at 8 PM: December 15th "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon", January 19th "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory", February 16th "The King and I", March 15th "National Velvet", and April 19th "King Kong". There is no admission charge, but a donation to the library will be appreciated.

The library ran a "Name the Doll" contest, and the proud winner was Sean Rabbit with the name "Dollie Julie".

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HEATH CHURCH SCHOOL

by Brenda Sumner

The Heath Church School meets on Monday afternoons from 3:30 to 4:30. The ecumenical church school is for all elementary school age children. Attendance has been steady at 20-25 children each week. Children are divided into three classes with Dawn Corey teaching first and second grades, Brenda Sumner teaching third and fourth grades, and Todd Sumner teaching fifth and sixth grades.

Anyone who would be interested in substituting in case of illness, or who would like to help out with music one day a month, please contact Brenda Sumner at 337-4930.

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORT

By Lynn Miller

One of the most vital issues to come before the School Committee, at a Rowe School Committee meeting, has been consideration to hire a principal for Rowe Elementary for next year. Fred Homer's temporary appointment will be concluded at the end of this school year, and it is mandatory that the School Committee go through the process of advertizing the job. This provides a healthy opportunity to evaluate the educational policy and leadership at the school. Heath members on the Principal Selection Committee are Cecelia Sherman and Marietta Drummond.

Your School Committee represents neither staff nor administration but all of you in Heath, so let us hear from you.

One of the largest items in our Heath elementary education budget is transportation, and it will occupy much of the School Committee's time during the next few months as we draw up specifications for a new transportation contract for next year.

The Mohawk and Rowe Elementary information meetings, held after the last two regular School Committee meetings, were well attended by both parents and students. The Mohawk meeting was held just four days after the bus accident in Heath, so contract specifications, bus inspection, and driver qualifications were discussed. Closer attention to driver references and contract requirements were suggested. At the suggestion of Carroll Stowe, John Churchill became a valuable member of the bus inspection committee and his generous donation of time is very much appreciated.

The information meetings also covered the transition between Rowe and Mohawk; what emphasis should be placed on homework, athletics, and pressures on the students; application of Chapter 766 funds to gifted students; and preparation of students with vocational education as a goal. It is hoped there might be more emphasis on academic excellence without forsaking the humanistic emphasis on the whole child.

The objective of these meetings was to give everyone a chance to be heard, and we learned a lot about what you are thinking. That was a good beginning. More open meetings are planned in the future.

DOG OFFICER APPOINTED

Michael Smead, Cyrus Stage Road, 339-5389, has been appointed Dog Officer by the selectmen.

HEATH PLAY GROUP

By Anne Henderson

After close to a year of planning, Heath's newest play group opened for classes this September. Located at Debbie Porter's house on No. 9 Road, the school offers local children between the ages of 2 and 5 the opportunity to meet and share experiences.

The school is open from 9 AM to noon, Monday through Friday. School holidays are the same as those observed by the Rowe school. Nutritious snacks are provided. Enrollment is limited to six students per day. There are currently 10 children participating in the program including Ben Steinbock, Emily Nichols, Justin and Brenden Randall, Justine Krumm, Siena Christman, Melanie Henderson, Kevin Cetto, Robby Sessions, Jennifer Gilbert and Melissa Pinkham.

The school is staffed by Debbie Porter and Sheila Litchfield. Debbie is a certified primary school teacher who has taught kindergarten through grade 3. Sheila is a registered nurse whose specialty is maternal and child-care health. Both women felt that in a rural area like Heath, there is need for children to meet and learn to play together. The school provides a pleasant atmosphere for the fulfillment of that goal.

Facilities are geared to meeting the needs of the children. Indoors there are areas devoted to block play, housekeeping, water play, painting, coloring, pasting and cutting, and working with clay. There is also a quiet area where children can relax and look at books or do puzzles, and a toy area with a rocking horse, play airport and garage. Outdoors there is a large fenced play yard and a sand box.

Sheila and Debbie take the children to the Rowe school library every week.

The children and teachers would like to thank everyone who has helped to make the play group a reality by donating time, labor, and materials. If anyone would like further information about the group, Sheila and Debbie will be happy to answer any questions. They can be reached at 337-4715 during school hours.

GIRL SCOUTS HAVE ACTIVE YEAR

The Rowe-Heath Junior Girl Scout Troop #94 had a busy year with Mrs. Christine A. Tower as leader and the Rowe Grange as sponsor. President Laurel Clark of Heath, Vice President Roxanne Leger of Rowe, and Mrs. Gloria Leger Secretary-Treasurer led the troop in learning many crafts such as candle-making, embroidery, ceramics, baking, and making maple syrup. They also made decorations for a community supper, a Halloween party, Christmas and other holidays. Along with carolling for the shut-ins at Christmas, they made and distributed cookies to them. The Girl Scouts 60th birthday was celebrated by a Church service after which they served cup cakes made by the Scouts.

The year ended with Fly-Up ceremonies, manning the money-making hamburger-hot dog booth at Rowe Old Home Day, and attending Camp Sunset in August thanks to the generosity of Jack and Nancy Williams of Rowe.

October 23rd, 1979 began a new year with an enrollment of twenty-one girls, and a busy schedule planned.

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MILESTONES

Gregory Dana was born to Alan and Catherine (Heyl) Nichols of Heath on October 27th.

Kevin Ronald was born to Ronald and Karen (Stetson) Duda on October 11th. They live in Whately.

Joanne Giard was married to Paul Fournier on October 27 in Enfield, Connecticut. Joanne is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Giard. Paul is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Fournier.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Percival of Jacksonville Stage Road celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 15. Open house was held at the Community Hall in Heath for their relatives and friends.

Helen Fogel-Songer died on October 3rd. She was the mother of Jennifer Cory of Heath.

Amelia DeLutio died on November 15 at the Anchoage Nursing Home. She leaves her husband Jeff DeLutio, and a daughter Marion Mascola both of Heath.

RICHARD A. SUMNER
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