



HEATH HERALD

HEATH'S FIRST NEWSPAPER 50¢

PLANNING BOARD REPORT

Several years ago, Heath went through a growth spurt that, coupled with a failure of the "Massachusetts Miracle", made it a full time struggle to keep the town's financial head above water. The Planning Board attempted to set up a strategy to help the town cope, give us a little breathing space, and manage the growth of Heath in a fair and responsible way. After almost 2 years of preliminary work, the Planning Board presented a new Zoning By-Law package to the town. It was passed overwhelmingly, and having gone into effect, has played a role in keeping the town from becoming a municipal version of Pan Am. In the continuing effort to protect the future of Heath, maintain its rural character, and manage its financial outlook, the Planning Board has turned to another area of concern, roads.

Time, and historical tides have shifted Heath again and again. Like many other towns Heath has changed and shifted its roads to meet those tides. The end result is that there are many roads, or sections of roads, that once upon a time, were useful, necessary arteries, but have now been virtually abandoned and replaced by more functional roads. The problem then becomes what to do about these roads that are still on the books, but not really servicing the town. Many people might even ask, "Why do anything at all, just leave 'em be". So then, we really have two things to look at, WHY do anything and WHAT to do.

First of all, here's the why. As long as a road is still considered a town or country road, "still on the books", it remains the town's responsibility. The town could be made to plow it, fix it, or pave it. Bringing these roads up to code would devastate the town financially, at a time when we're struggling to keep our present day roads serviceable. The vast majority of townspeople never have and never will use these old roads, probably don't even know they exist. Yet, the potential for disaster is all too real.

So we return to the question of what to do about the situation. Several steps are already underway. At present, we are petitioning the county commissioners to discontinue a few county roads in town. County roads can only be taken off the books by the county after receiving a petition, holding a hearing, and then voting. The Planning Board was unsure of just how long this process would take, and therefore moved on county roads first. Next, we will address town roads (some of which underlay county roads). We must review what information we have at present (primarily the extensive work undertaken by Ed Calver several years ago) trying to determine the beginnings and ends of old town roads.

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WILD RAMBLINGS

by BILL LATTRELL

THE GRAY GHOST

My wild ramblings around the countryside of Heath and surrounding communities often bring surprises. One that occurs frequently, and never fails to startle me, is the sudden thundering of wings as a ruffed grouse flies from under my feet or from a nearby branch. This loud noise accompanied by only a glimpse of the bird as it glides through branches is seldom anticipated. Although it often interrupts my concentration, it never fails to bring a smile to my face. The understanding that surprise always awaits you in the wilds is part of what makes these expeditions so enjoyable.

The ruffed grouse is a master of survival. The list of animals that prey upon it is extensive: owls, hawks, bobcat, fox, coyotes, fisher, and yes, man. In order to survive this onslaught of predation it has developed unique survival skills. First, the ruffed grouse is very well camouflaged. The brown, gray, and black mottled colors blend well with its preferred deciduous forest environment. This bird is generally very wary. When observing it one will notice that it is always on the look out. Even the slightest noise from a distance will bring a halt to its activities. The partridge, as it is known in these parts, will freeze, ready to escape to a nearby thicket, until the source of the noise has been identified. When it is still, the

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A CLOSE LOOK AT A GRAY GHOST
(Photo by Bill Lattrell)

PERCS, PERMITS AND TRANSFERS

PERCOLATION TESTS

Earl Gleason reports there was no activity in this period. Perc testing is suspended until April.

BUILDING PERMITS

Hugh Klockars, Sr., Colrain Brook Road, wood stove.
Randall Cobb, Heath Stage Road, addition to residence.

John Cable, Flagg Hill Road, change use of cabin to storage shed/demolish storage shed.

John Cable, Colrain Brook Road, demolish shed.
Total: \$11,300.

DEED TRANSFERS

Don R. and Marilyn L. Conlan of South Pasedena, CA, to The Conlan Living Trust, Don R. and Marilyn L. Conlan as Trustees, Ben Road. No consideration.

Sharon R. LaValley, Dawn M. Davignon and Sheila Jones to George L. Young of Agawam, 20 Lakeview Drive. \$4,000.

Sharon R. LaValley, Dawn M. Davignon and Sheila Jones to George L. Young of Chicopee, 19 Clearwater Drive. \$4,000.

Robert M. and Jayne Hare Dane to David J. Singer of Greenfield, Rowe Road. \$1.

David J. Singer of Greenfield to Robert M. and Jayne Hare Dane, Rowe Road. \$1.

Linda V. Cloutier, Daniel Veilleux, Donald Veilleux, Michael Veilleux and Rene Veilleux, Jr. to Linda V. Cloutier, Daniel Veilleux, Donald Veilleux, Michael Veilleux and Rene Veilleux, Jr. of South Windsor, CT, Colrain Brook Road, Lots 1, 2, 3 and 4. \$1.



HEATH HERALD

HEATH'S FIRST NEWSPAPER

VOLUME 14 NUMBER 1

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APRIL/MAY 1992

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Send all correspondence to Box 54, Heath, MA 01346

LETTERS

To the Editor:

Ken and I just finished reading the February/March *Heath Herald*. We look forward to reading "our town's" wonderful newspaper all year. However, during the months we spend in North Carolina it is especially welcome. We devour every word about our busy, little town.

We do love our "adopted" North Carolina home. (The climate is mild and our little community is full of people very much like the people in Heath.)

Thank you for a touch of "home" all year around. Thank you *Herald* staff.

Mrs. Carolyn Litchfield
Sanford, NC and Heath, MA

To the Editor:

The following letter is being presented to the staff at Rowe School during Teacher Appreciation Week, May 4-8. We, the parents, would like to share with the communities of Heath and Rowe how much we appreciate the loving, quality job the teachers of our school are doing.

Veronica Smead
Suzanne Taylor
Co-Chairpersons
Rowe School PTP

Dear Teachers,

As parents growing with our children, we realize that we are not the ONLY major influence in their development. During Teacher Appreciation Week we parents want to acknowledge all that each of you do for all the children in your care.

Every child knows each of you is always there. Thank you!

Thank you for the loving atmosphere you all foster, recognizing each child as a unique member of the "school family"!

Thank you for all the extra effort and time you put into the cultural programs with the children, above and beyond your regular class load.

All this makes our children's school experience so enjoyable, and our children are receiving an education with attention to high academic standards. Thank you! In all the programs, academics, music, art, physical education and so much more, we parents see quality effort and care to details on the part of each teacher. Thank you! Our children are precious to us and it is comforting to know they are precious to you, too.

With sincere appreciation
All of us parents!

HEATH PRECIPITATION

by Ralph H. Dickinson
Observer for Mass. Division of Water Resources

February precipitation was 2.01 inches and 12.5 inches of snow. During March we had a total precipitation of 4.54 inches, 4.5 of which was snow.

The total precipitation from January through March is 9.45 inches. The snowfall total for this winter season is 36.5 inches. Many of the winter storms have gone south of us. We had windy days in March. Sugaring started in early March then the cold weather postponed it for three weeks.

LETTERS

To the Editor:

I am writing today regarding the Heath Public Preschool. I understand the school committee is seeking a \$10,000 town contribution for next year. I, for one, support their decision regarding the need for the upcoming year.

Preschool has proven to be an important factor in the education of our children. National studies have proven its value to those who attend. The children receive fewer failing grades throughout their school years and also repeat few grades. They are more likely to graduate from high school and go on to college. Children who attend preschool benefit in later years as they show more academic motivation, have greater self-confidence, fewer arrests, higher employment rates, greater participation in sports, fewer acts of drug abuse and delinquent behavior, lower incidence of teenage pregnancy and absenteeism, and have set higher goals for themselves.

So, who pays for all of these benefits? The trend is shifting more and more to the local town level. The state has been level funding our preschool for the past few years. Even with this contribution, the preschool has come up short and relied on tuition and fundraising to make ends meet. They have asked the towns of Heath and Rowe for support as well. If all of this money comes through for next year, the preschool still expects a \$10,000 shortage. This shortage does not represent a substantial increase in staff salaries. It is mostly due from skyrocketing health insurance costs.

The Heath Public Preschool has been operating on a wing and a prayer for many years now. The teachers and assistants don't know if they have a job until the school year starts. Parents keep their youngsters waiting until the last minute before they can tell them whether or not they'll have a school to go to. I think the school has proven itself and the fact that it is here to stay. I think it's time we accept this and look ahead to find the best way to keep it in operation.

I'm not saying that we should give the preschool whatever they ask for in the years to come. What I am saying is that the program should be reviewed each year to be sure it meets the needs of all the families it was designed to serve. The preschool has an Advisory Council which can help in this process. The school committee is also responsible to see that the needs of the community are being met. This year it was necessary to change the program to help reduce operating costs. The staff took salary cuts and the school year was shortened slightly. There was no money allotted for any equipment or enhancements to the program. The budget was designed to just cover the basic supplies, staff salaries and employee benefits.

The \$10,000 shortage cannot be made up with never ending fundraising. This year was the most aggressive fundraising year the preschool has ever seen. Over \$4,000 was raised, with a lot of this money coming from the generosity of the people in our own community. Fundraising money should not be used just to make ends meet as it has in the past. This money should be available for scholarships for children who cannot afford the existing tuition rates. Being a public preschool means all children should be allowed to attend. Funds should be available to allow for this. Fundraising money should also be used for enrichments to the school, perhaps new equipment and supplies, additional field trips, and other needed items.

The \$10,000 shortage cannot be made up with higher tuition rates. History has proven that parents will pull their children out of the program if the rates are set too high. Next year's tuition is planned to be the same as this year. The range is \$15, \$25, and \$35 per month based upon one's ability to pay. Some families have two children enrolled. They are charged a reduced rate for the second child but that still adds up to a lot. This is not an high income community. These times have been extremely hard on people financially. Many are in a constant struggle just to make the mortgage payment and put food on the table. Being able to pay should not be a factor in whether or not a child has the opportunity to attend a preschool. Parents should not have to pay extreme rates to send their children. This is a public preschool, not a daycare center! I feel the parents do have an obligation to support the school by paying tuition, doing volunteer work, and also fundraising. But, the amount they have to pay must be realistic.

I do not have any children who will be attending this preschool in the future. I do, however, have two boys who have attended and benefitted from this program. I would like to see my tax dollars continue to support this school for the benefit of other children in our community. The people of our community have proven their support of the school as well. They have given donations, helped in fundraising efforts, and voted to give the preschool a \$2,086 town contribution for the past few years. How far is everyone willing to go? Now is the time to think on it.

Michele Cutter
Community Support
Committee, Chairperson

FLOWER LOVERS OF ROWE & HEATH

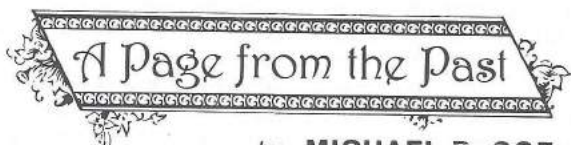
As our thoughts drift to spring, aren't we all anxious to get out there and get our hands dirty? Well, naturally members of the Rowe Elementary School PTP have been experiencing the same urges. The PTP has come up with the idea of a garden tour right here in Rowe and Heath! Our two towns are very fortunate to have so many people with flower gardens. With what beauty they bless our area! All gardens bring joy and pleasure to their owners, so how about sharing your joy and pleasure with the rest of your neighbors? Whether your garden is small or large, simple or elaborate, flower lovers will enjoy it. Please consider putting your garden on the tour.

The Garden Tour is scheduled for Saturday, June 13 from 10 AM to 4 PM. A list of gardens will be provided and a small ticket price will be collected to help support the efforts of the Rowe Elementary School PTP. Refreshments are scheduled to be served mid-day at the school.

If you are interested or know of someone who would be interested, please call Veronica Smead (337-5389) or Sue Taylor (339-5530) to be included. Let's go smell out the flowers together and maybe make some new friends as we walk around Rowe and Heath! Sincere thanks for your participation from the PTP.

NEW FLAG

There is a new flag aloft on the common. The old flag, a 4 x 6 nylon, did not stand up to the high Heath winds. The new one is a 5 x 8 Tough-Tex polyester bunting. The new size is more in keeping with what the minimum size of the U. S. Flag should be, one fourth in length the pole's height.



by MICHAEL D. COE

A HERO FROM OUR HISTORY

Out of the mists of time occasionally step historical figures who were great heroes to their own people or nation -- a Leonidas, a Nelson, or a Sergeant York. One such hero played a crucial role on the New England frontier two and half centuries ago, and his exploits need to be celebrated as much as those that I have mentioned. Today's visitor to Deerfield's Old Burying Ground can see his grave there, with a simple headstone marked with the name "Col. John Hawks", and find out that he was born in 1707 and died, rich in years, in 1784.

In his youth and middle age, our hero lived in an incredibly dangerous time, with almost constant hostilities between the English settlers of this part of New England, and their French and Indian foes. The conflict that is known to Americans as the French and Indian War broke out in 1744, and Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts immediately ordered the construction of a Line of Forts along the Colony's northwestern border, with headquarters at Fort Shirley, in what is now Heath. Later, for strategic reasons, the headquarters become Fort Massachusetts on the Hoosac River in present-day North Adams (the site is now largely under the parking lot for the Price Chopper supermarket!).

In the turbulent spring and summer of 1746, Hawks found himself a sergeant in the Fort Massachusetts garrison, under the command of Col. Ephraim Williams. In revenge for the French loss of Louisbourg (which I have told of in an earlier column), Governor Beauharnois of Canada sent out three or four war parties of French and Indians each week against the frontier. On May 9th, Hawks and one of the soldiers of the fort were crossing the Hoosac on one horse. They were ambushed by two Indians; the soldier escaped to the fort, but Hawks was shot in the left arm. Resting his gun on his wounded arm, Hawks held them off before he could be scalped, and the two enemy fled. On June 11, a party of Indians fell upon a group of soldiers working near the fort, killed Elisha Nims who had just come from Fort Shirley with Capt. Williams, wounded Hawks' brother Ger-shom, and took Benjamin Taintor captive.

The ensuing events bear testimony to the greatness in John Hawks. In early August, in the absence of his commander, our hero was in charge of Fort Massachusetts. On Saturday, August 16, Dr. Thomas Williams, Surgeon to the Line of Forts, left the fort for Deerfield, along with 14 soldiers, with the intention of getting stores at Deerfield, especially ammunition which was very low. This was an urgent mission, as signs of the enemy had been discovered. Unknown to Hawks, the doctor's party had left under the very eyes of the encircling enemy, who had let them pass in peace as they reduced the number of the fort's defenders.

Four miles down river, a force of 440 French and 300 Indians were camped; they were led by Pierre Francois Rigaud de Vaudreuil. Within the fort, Hawks had only 21 men, eleven of whom were sick from dysentery, along with women and children. The English were thus outnumbered by 30-1. On the morning of August 19, Vaudreuil raised his standard before the fort, and the onslaught began, with shout-

ing and heaving firing. The intrepid Hawks ordered that they should not be fired on until they could be securely hit. At 20 rods (330 feet) the defenders opened fire, at which the enemy darted behind trees, stumps, and logs. The chief of the St. Francis Indians soon fell dead from a shot in the chest by Hawks, the most renowned sharpshooter on the frontier. Vaudreuil himself was winged in the arm by another well-aimed bullet, at which the enemy withdrew to their camp.

Ammunition was at a low ebb, and the defenders expected a night attack, although the French and Indians kept up their firing throughout the night.

The next morning the attack was renewed, and many of the enemy could be seen making preparations for burning the fort. About noontime, the enemy indicating that they wished to talk, Hawks and the Rev. John Norton (chaplain to the forts), went to parley with Vaudreuil, who told them that unless they surrendered, Fort Massachusetts would be taken by storm. The situation was hopeless: there were not more than three or four pounds of powder left, and the same amount of lead. If the fort were to be taken by violence, the Indians would surely kill every man, woman and child. Favorable terms were agreed upon (mainly that the English would be in French, not Indian hands), and the captives were led off north into Canada, not to be returned until they were ransomed the following year.

Everyone in Heath must know the poignant story of the Rev. Norton. When he returned to his home in Fort Shirley, he found that his little daughter Ann Norton had died and been buried near the fort, where her headstone (or at least a reproduction of it) can still be seen in the woods.

But the heroic tale of John Hawks does not end there. The next episode in his life almost reaches the superhuman. Early in 1748, Hawks was commissioned by Gov. Shirley to take a young French captive, a noble cadet named Pierre Raimbault St. Blein, from Boston to Canada and exchange him for two English captives. One of these was Hawks' nephew Samuel Allen, who had been taken in the meadows south of Deerfield following the capture of Fort Massachusetts. Hawks, the French officer, and two other militiamen were fitted out with snowshoes, and left Deerfield on February 8, in the dead of winter, carrying their provisions on their backs. Their route took them north into and across the Green Mountains, then a howling wilderness deep with snow, over to Lake Champlain, and up to Montreal -- even today, this is a five- to six-hour journey by fast car over superhighways.



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CUB SCOUT NEWS

by Michele Cutter, Committee Chairperson

Reaching their destination on February 27, they found young Allen with the Indians, but he virtually had to be removed by force as he had gone completely native; to the end of his days in Deerfield, Allen maintained that the Indian way of life was the best. On their return trip, Raimbault graciously accompanied them to the French frontier, but after that they were on their own. Hawks' party was continually dogged by Indians who were on their trail, but the seasoned scout was as good a woodsman as they, and the party managed to elude their pursuers.

After these exploits, the remainder of the war must have seemed pretty tame stuff to John Hawks, but he played an honorable and important role in subsequent hostilities. He was posted as lieutenant to Hugh Morrison's fort in Colrain, from whence he sent out scouts to patrol the eastern part of the Line of Forts. By 1758, Hawks was commanding a company in the British attack on Fort Ticonderoga, and in the next year he had risen to major under General Amherst. His final moment of glory came in 1760, when he was a lieutenant colonel in the British army that finally conquered Canada for the Crown.

With the peace that followed the Treaty of Paris in 1763, Hawks returned to Deerfield, never to take up arms again; he lived out the rest of his days as honored hero and successful civilian, surrounded by his numerous children and grandchildren. No portrait of this wonderful figure from our past survives, and probably none was ever painted. But if you want to see something of the man, go to Deerfield's Memorial Hall, where you may admire the great frontiersman's own muzzle-loading gun, hanging there in a case: this is ample witness to the life and accomplishments of Col. John Hawks, hero.

Howard Crowningshield

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It's been a very busy year for the 23 Heath and Rowe cub scout boys. It's also been hectic for the parents and leaders who have rolled up their sleeves to pitch in and find out what scouting is all about.

The cub scouts have participated in several group events this year. The Scouting for Food Drive was held in November. Our boys collected a total of 131 items which were donated to the Western Massachusetts Food Bank. In December, there was the Bowl-a-Thon which was a fundraiser. The money the boys raised helped to keep our pack in operation as well as the Great Trails Council regional offices and camps. In March, the pack held its annual Pine-wood Derby. Each boy built his own race car which was judged for speed and appearance. Special thanks to John Musacchio for building a new race-track and to Walt Gleason for judging the event. Still planned is a roadside clean-up in April and an award picnic at Rowe Pond in June.

Our cub scout pack consists of three groups this year. The Tiger Cubs is designed to introduce first graders to scouting. The Bear Den is comprised mostly of third grade boys, and the Webelo Den is basically fourth and fifth graders. The Rowe School PTP is our charter sponsor.

The Tiger Cubs meet once a month at one of the boys' homes. Their parents assist them in the activities which have included: making Halloween pumpkins, Thanksgiving decorations, Christmas ornaments, learning how to track animals and building birdfeeders. They plan to go bowling in the near future.

Den leader Maureen O'Malley has been quite busy with the Bear Den. The boys fathers have assisted her in such projects as: hiking, building a shelter in the woods, ice fishing, learning how to fold the flag, playing basketball, telling folklore stories around the campfire, making tin can lanterns, competing in a human dogsled race, and making white birch centerpieces. They hold den meetings every two weeks and always seem to have a lot of fun.

Dennis Kuehl opens up his home every two weeks to the Webelo Den. He is assisted by Arlene Markert. His boys have been working on their citizenship badges. This has entailed learning about local, state and federal government, the Pledge of Allegiance, the history of our flag and how to honor and care for it, the rights and duties of U.S. citizens, ways in which the United States helps other countries, the National Anthem and how it was written, and they also wrote essays about some aspect of good citizenship. They will be working on the Engineering badge. Currently the boys are constructing various types of bridges and will test them for strength and durability in the near future.

Every other month, the cub scouts get together at the Community Hall for a pack meeting. This gives them the opportunity to share what they have learned and to receive recognition for their achievements. It also proves to be an informative night about upcoming events. No pack meeting would be complete without the games, activities, stories and songs of our Cub Master, Kevin Gilbert.

Cub scouts is a lot of fun, but it's a lot of work for those involved. The boys must meet many requirements to earn their awards. They rely a great deal on their den leaders and parents for assistance. The reward of what scouting teaches everyone is well worth the time and effort spent.

—OPEN FORUM—

PRIORITIES

by Arlene Markert

Read any good newspaper articles lately? Everything that I've seen recently is filled with stories about the budget crunch, shortages, lay-offs, Yankee Rowe closing, recession, foreclosures, tax-taking, bank failures, sky-rocketing insurance costs, homelessness, divorce, child abuse and on and on. Let's not forget how, according to the media, our society fails at raising and educating our children to become competitive assets in the world economy. Depressing isn't it? We might as well forget about trying to change things - right?? That certainly would be the easy choice, but luckily for everyone we do have choices.

Probably the hardest thing about making choices is how to prioritize them. This is especially true when your choices involve money as so many of them do these days. Do I pay the electric bill or the car insurance this week? Oh, and what about the car payment and clothes for the children? Eventually, we all work through these day-to-day matters. Sometimes our plan of action only solves our short-term problems and we never seem to get around to any long-term solutions. These same issues face our schools, in particular our own Preschool.

For the last several years I have been a member of the Heath Preschool Advisory Council. Since its inception as a public preschool, I have witnessed a constant struggle on the part of the staff, parents and community to find adequate financing to operate a quality program. We have all witnessed a callous and discriminatory slashing of state support and funding. The Preschool Advisory Council knew of its responsibility to move toward financial independence from the state. Many significant strides have been made in that direction. Conditions in this state, and in this area particularly, have made the efforts exceedingly difficult. As a result, the Preschool Advisory Council, the Director, and the School Committee realize that there is a need for public support and have placed an article on the town meeting warrant for an appropriation of \$10,000 for the Preschool.

Now we're back to priorities again. Our town is not a financially rich community. My taxes are certainly high and becoming more difficult to pay. There is something we need to consider beyond this fiscal issue, however. Children. What do the children need? Certainly, the basics of food, shelter and clothing are essential. Beyond that we need to provide them with love, security and a quality future. Part of that quality future is our responsibility to provide them with an education.

Since we have public education in this country, one would assume that public education is a priority. As an educator, I am certainly very cognizant of the demands, expectations, and needs of our society concerning this matter. What really concerns me is the mixed message our society sends concerning education and our children. We want it but we will NOT pay for it. As the Kindergarten teacher, I can assure you of the many benefits afforded the children who attend preschool. These children have already had an opportunity to learn basic socialization skills such as separating from parents, entering a new environment, interacting with others, forming a sense of self-worth and respect as well as many other educational goals. When they do arrive at Kindergarten, they are ready and motivated to learn.

Certainly you have heard that children in this country are falling educationally behind other nations. If that is the case, let's provide our children with the best opportunities that we can and face the fact that it will cost us some money!! Aren't the children worth it? Aren't they our (parents, grandparents, community members) responsibility, our future, our most basic obligation? Do we no longer support the family as the foundation of our community? Let's support our children, families and Preschool. What is your priority - money or the value of a young life?? Please support the Preschool's very reasonable request.



CHRIS BURKE & KATHY TUTURICE
WORKING ON AN AFRICAN PROJECT
(Rowe School Photo)

MOHAWK ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

by Sandy Magill

The Mohawk Athletic Association is again presenting FunFest at Mohawk Trail Regional High School on Saturday, June 13. This year the main event will be a truck raffle. A 1992 Ford Ranger XLT from Sweeney Ford, sticker price \$12,353 (tax and title NOT included), will be raffled. The brilliant blue clearcoat truck with sport stripe features a standard 5 speed, fuel injection engine, sliding rear window and stereo with cassette player. There will be a total of ten prizes including the truck on the raffle ticket for a cost of \$20. The odds of winning one of the ten prizes is one in one hundred. Tickets are being sold for \$20. Tickets are available from members of the Mohawk Athletic Association, at the High School office or Room 107, and by mailing your \$20 check to M.A.A., Post Office Box 110, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370. All proceeds benefit the sports program at Mohawk Trail Regional High School which presently continues to be unfunded by the school budget.

The M.A.A. is currently looking for candidates for its slate of officers to be voted upon in May. Anyone interested in being an officer is asked to contact Bob Hinds, 625-3649 or Sandy Magill, 625-9811.



The Way It Is In The Country

*"If it's old, works well and has a purpose in life,
don't change it".*

by CARROLL STOWE

TRACTOR AND OLD IRON SHOW, 1992

Because I have profound respect for useful pieces from the agricultural past of our area, I want to continue the tractor and old iron show for the third year. The older and more simply repaired pieces of farming equipment are a great interest to an increasing number of people.

Whenever I hear of an old tractor or hay baler or horse drawn mower that has been restored to near new conditions, I am truly pleased.

I look upon this equipment with a pride which comes from knowing that there is an article that helped to support a family or perhaps a whole community.

I can think of an old Deering horse drawn mower that was a great investment for us in the Stowe family when they came to Colrain from south Readsboro, VT. That mower was new in 1908 and it came to Colrain in pieces. I would hazard a guess that there were at the most 4 teams of horses that powered that mower until it was accidentally smashed for junk in the early 1950's. This mower was a very easy running unit and didn't over work the team pulling it. I could take anyone interested to the field on the Jefferson's place where I was first given the honor of mowing with that fine machine. I say that an educated guess of 4 different teams of horses powered that mower but it would be greatly impossible to even come close to totalize the number of cattle that were fed because it was there to mow the hay and rowen.

It was never a constant source of trouble for repair. Parts, when needed, were always available though Sears-Roebuck or the Ward's catalog.

I am very much aware that I write of a truly unfeeling lump of cast iron and wood but it was very much a part of my life and I will always cherish the good life it very much helped to provide our family.

Every day I am embarrassed trying to remember a person's name but never will I forget the tremendous team that I drove on that mower. Chub was a big bay horse and a dapple grey, Dick, his stable and team mate. With every chance I get I tell people what a pleasure they've missed if they never mowed hay with a good team. When it was very hot, Dad would mow after supper to give the team a bit of relief from the heat. Afterwards, I've seen him take them down to the river front of the house and give them a nice cool bath. How they seemed to enjoy that consideration.

As I said before that good mower was accidentally smashed for junk to buy a case of beer. I never knew of my Dad being so upset over anything without any feelings.

Computers can give us answers to a myriad of questions but it would be beyond the ability of any computer to figure the earning capacity of that mower and the amount of good it did for a lot of people. One day I would like to find a machine like it to have as a treasure of my early days. Some will wonder if this was about a mowing machine or a team of horses and I will say that it is about a unit both ends of which made the other look good. I'd be proud to see an old Deering mower at the Tractor Show April 25-26 at the Heath fairgrounds.

CHURCH NEWS

by Pastor Roger Peace

**"In the glorious Easter Story, a troubled world can find,
Blessed reassurance and enduring peace of mind."**

These are the first lines of a beautiful poem written by Helen Steiner Rice. It's hard to believe that Easter is coming so rapidly. But with all the other things that might pre-occupy our minds, let us not forget the true meaning of Easter. To Him who said, "It is finished" let everyone praise the name. This is such an exciting time of year and we at Heath Union Church are planning some wonderful activities. First of all the Youth group will be sponsoring an Easter Egg hunt on April 11 followed by a puppet skit. The following day - Sunday - the entire Sunday School will be doing a play and musical celebrating the resurrection of Christ. I am very proud of the enthusiasm I have seen in this group of young people. Then on Friday, April 17 at 7:30 PM we are hosting the fourth annual West County Good Friday Service. Easter morning will begin at 6 AM with the Sunrise Service at the top of Bray Road in the field to the right. There will be no Sunday School, but at 10 AM the Heath Choir will be singing the cantata entitled "Beyond The Tomb". Anyone interested in purchasing Easter plants to display in church or donate to the church in memory of a loved one please contact Ruth Corey at 337-6612.

May continues to be a busy and exciting time at the church. To begin the month, on Saturday, May 2, the Standing Committee will have a work bee at church. Many jobs are already planned, so come prepared to work. On May 10 we will honor our mothers in the worship service. Then on Wednesday the youth will be going to another church to do puppets for a banquet. On May 2, 9 AM - 5 PM, some of the ladies are putting together a clothes rummage sale to raise money for the purchase of new choir robes. Any donations would be appreciated; so contact Catherine Cromack at 337-4350. It would be kind of the donors if the clothes were clean and in good condition. The ladies will be setting up on Friday, May 1. To close the month we are planning a night of fun and food. Sunday, May 31, a talent show and potluck supper will give anyone interested a chance to "show-off" their talents. Small prizes will be awarded. Talents could consist of most any kind; for example - singing, reading, comedy, musical instruments, etc. Call Rachel Sumner at 337-4302 if you plan to participate.

If you do any spring cleaning, and you don't know what to do with all that good "stuff", why not donate it to the church auction that is coming on June 27 from 10 AM - 4 PM. Remember, the Youth meet at 6 PM the first Sunday of the month, Sunday School at 9 AM each Sunday, Bible Study on Wednesday at 7 PM every first and third Wednesday. Hope you can make some of these special activities. See you Sunday at 10 AM. May you all have a very blessed Easter!

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HEATH PUBLIC PRESCHOOL NEWS

by Pam Porter

The other day a friend asked, "What do children learn in preschool? Don't they just play there?" The answer of course is yes, they do "just" play there. But what is going on when children just play?

Children learn through play. In fact it has been said that for children, play is their work. The learning that takes place when children play provides the foundation for all the success of their future learning. In a book about child's play, Sara Smilansky has identified four types of play: Functional play, constructive play, games with rules and dramatic play.

In functional play, children learn about the properties and functions of materials and objects. This is what a baby is doing when everything she picks up goes into her mouth or when he grasps an object and starts to bang it against the rug and then another toy. How does it feel? How do you hold it? What does it taste like? Is it food? What sound does it make? At preschool children continue this type of learning as they manipulate such materials as sand, clay, water and paint. Building on their previous knowledge and experience, they explore properties of volume, force, texture, weight. What is the difference in the way you can use wet sand and dry sand? What happens when you mix red paint with orange paint? Does the water in this tall skinny pitcher fit in this short fat one? At preschool, teachers provide varieties of materials and plenty of time for this type of exploration. By sharing observations with children and asking them open-ended questions about their play/work, teachers help children recognize, value and extend their learning. This kind of learning is typical of children to about six years of age, but certainly continues after this age. (Just ask any sculptor, potter, painter, cook, scientist, musician, anyone whose work involves understanding and extending knowledge about materials and objects.)

In constructive play children use what they have learned about the objects and materials in their environment to make something. For example, after carrying blocks around, loading them and unloading them onto trucks, using them for pretend food in the housekeeping corner, learning through their senses a great deal about the size, hardness, weight, squareness of blocks, finally children begin to build with them. At first they tend to make flat constructions like roads and floors, placing blocks side by side or end to end, but soon they move on to making bridges and walls, and inside spaces. They learn how to use the blocks to make the strongest walls, tall and beautiful buildings, or finally, buildings that represent the ones the children know about: their homes, the school, the town garage. Children learn to imagine, plan and follow through on their ideas. They learn to solve problems like how to make a tall building that won't fall down, for example, or what to do when all the long blocks are used up and you still need some. (Will you ask someone to give you some of theirs? Can you find some shorter blocks that can be used together to get the needed length?) When children build they are developing math concepts such as spatial relationships and equivalence. They are asking questions like: How many? What kind? How big? How do they fit together? What will make it work? They are developing thinking skills like planning, problem solving. They are developing their ability to concentrate on a task and see it through to completion. And they are often learning how to work with others to achieve their goals.

These skills are all essential to the learning children will do for the rest of their lives. Just ask a builder, an architect, a teacher, a road boss, anyone who works with others to build a community, create an environment or produce a product.

Sometimes children play games with rules like Duck, Duck, Goose or Red Light, Green Light. These games, which we tend to play at circle time or outdoors, help children learn to control their behavior and play by the rules. They help children learn to wait turns, to manage appropriate amounts of competition and feelings of success and failure, and they contribute to a sense of belonging to a group. At the preschool level, these games are very simple and de-emphasize competition. The goal is often simply to help children learn to have a good time doing something with a large group of friends. As children get older, they build on their early experiences of games with rules to work out ideas of fairness and order, inclusion, participation and commitment. The pleasure and understanding children begin to develop at the preschool level can influence their ideas about these things for years to come. Ask an athlete, a lawyer, a social worker, a minister, a policeman.

The fourth type is dramatic play. Children pretend to be a mother or a firefighter, a librarian or teacher or policeman. They use objects in their game of pretend to stand for other objects. Paper gets made into money and cylindrical blocks into canned goods for a game of store. Sugar houses and snow plows get built and used for extended play about seasonal activities. Countless birthday cakes with stick candles get made of sand. You might call this kind of play concrete story telling. Children are learning to understand the important characters in their communities. They are learning that things can stand for other things. They are learning to sustain and develop their thoughts, feelings, ideas and images of the world. Because this type of play usually involves others, children are also using words to communicate ideas, listening to the ideas of others, and learning to plan together and work out conflicts.

At preschool, teachers enter into this play with the children, either by asking open-ended questions or by taking on a character and modeling role playing. As in other types of play, teachers seek ways to extend the learning. They also want children to know that what they are doing is important because teachers know that dramatic play is the beginning of the ability to think abstractly. In fact, research has



KAREN FOURNIER & ANDY GILBERT
PLAY AN AFRICAN BOARD GAME
(Rowe School Photo)

shown that it provides an essential underpinning for all future academic success. To read and write, one must understand how things can stand for other things, or, more specifically, words and images can stand for information and ideas. Beyond this, learning to tell your own story is the beginning of literature. To solve a math problem, one must be able to visualize it to know whether to add, subtract, multiply or divide. To understand history, one must be able to put together many bits of information to create a mental picture of an era or event. To solve a scientific problem, one must be able to imagine a possible solution to test out. In dramatic play, children are learning all these things: to imagine and develop ideas, to visualize, to represent, to communicate.

Child's play is child's work and provides the concrete basis for all future learning. At the Heath Preschool our goal is to encourage, support, guide and cherish children at play knowing that through that play they are building a foundation for future learning and success. In addition to all the other learning that happens at preschool, there is another thing we hope our children are learning: that they belong to a community that values and cares about them enough to provide just the place for them to learn and grow.

Note: In writing this article I have drawn on several year's experiences at the Heath Preschool and used some material from The Creative Curriculum by Deane Trister Dodge and Laura J. Colker. At the Heath Preschool, we welcome visitors and invite you to stop by and see us, Monday through Wednesday. Call me at 337-4847 or 337-5525 if you would like to arrange a visit.

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MILESTONES

by Edith Royer

A daughter, Carrie Ann, was born February 14 to Robert R. and Cynthia (Coates) Coates of West Oxbow Road, Charlemont. Grandparents are Margaret Coates of Shelburne Falls, Robert F. Coates of Heath and Alan and Sylvia Coates of Charlemont.

Born on March 11, Nickolas Justin, a son to Melissa (Decker) and James Wright of Corsicanda, TX. He is the grandson of Bev and Wayne Decker, Arlington, TX, Ethel and Robert Williams and Sandra and James Wright, all of Burleson, TX. He is the great grandson of Mildred Decker of Heath, Marion Williams of Jacksonville, VT, Joe Lawson of TX, Emerson Clark of Charlemont and Mozell Dendy of Burleson, TX. Nickolas is the great-great grandson of Rudolph Fournier of Heath.

Helen (Malone) Nichols died March 19 at the Buckley Nursing Home in Greenfield. He had lived at the Lathrop Home in Northampton for about 5 years.

She and her late husband Lewis L. Nichols spent many summers in Heath before moving here.

Survivors includes 2 sons, Lewis R. of Vershire, VT and Alan L. of Heath. She also leaves two daughters, Mary Lena of Nyack, NY and Margaret Gibbs of Brunswick, ME, a sister Francis Malone of Greenfield, nine grandchildren and five great grandchildren as well as several nieces and nephews.

Burial will be in the Center Cemetery in the spring.

HEATH PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Catherine Wilkins of Heath has been accepted into the Five College Education in the Earth's Environment, Ecology and Energy Project (5C/5E). She is a faculty member of The Academy at Charlemont, Charlemont, MA where she teaches science and directs the Deerfield River Studies Program. Ms. Wilkins is one of 60 participants selected for the 5C/5E project which includes 3 spring Saturday workshops, a three week summer institute, an academic year program and a second one week summer institute. Ms. Wilkins will join a research team working in one of four environmental areas - the atmosphere, streams, energy, plant and insect interactions. The program is funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation and is sponsored by the Five College/Public School Partnership Program.

Garden designer, lecturer and writer, Elsa Bakalar of Heath was the special guest speaker at the first annual meeting of the Greenfield Garden Club on January 23. She spoke about "Perennials of the Northeast Through the Seasons".

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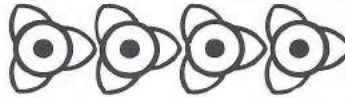
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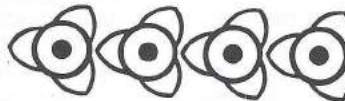
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....continued from page 1

bird is nearly impossible to distinguish from the natural background. When it does take off, the ruffed grouse has no rivals. This bird can go from 0-35 miles per hour in the blink of an eye. It is this fast and powerful takeoff that produces the thunderous beating of wings that surprises so many people when they encounter it. During the winter, the partridge will often bury itself in snow for a night snooze. The insulation of the snow protects the bird from the elements. In less severe weather it will spend the night in a conifer, protected from many of its predators. Another interesting adaptation that the ruffed grouse has attained through evolution is the ability to grow feathers between its toes just before the winter months. This not only keeps his feet warm, but acts as snowshoes when walking about on the snow as it forages beneath the forest canopy.

Because the ruffed grouse is so prone to being preyed upon, the bird produces large groups of hatchlings. As many as a dozen eggs are laid in a shallow nest on the ground amongst thick cover in the late spring. Only a few of these chicks will survive to adulthood, but as long as there is suitable habitat the partridge seems perfectly capable of holding its own.

The ruffed grouse's spring mating ritual is one of nature's many wonders. It is spectacular to observe, and has been the subject of much biological research. The male will often get on a log and beat the air with his wings at an incredibly rapid rate. This can be heard easily at a quarter mile distance. It is his way of attracting female company. To hear this mating ritual from a distance can be confusing to the inexperienced naturalist. As a boy I remember thinking it odd that someone was trying to start a motor in the woods. I could hear the motor start, and then die, over and over again. Finally my curiosity got the better of me and I began to look for the odd person trying to start a motor in the woods. Eventually the noise led me to a group of fallen trees. As I snuck up on the area I began to realize that the sound was not human. I was quite surprised to see a small bird creating such a loud noise as it flapped its wings, the speed of which cannot be gauged by the human eye. The female is attracted to this call, and when she arrives the male ruffed grouse performs a dance in which he struts about fanning his tail, displaying the black band of the tail feathers, while also puffing up his chest. What the female sees in this display I'll never know, but sooner or later she gets very interested and flies over to join the male grouse.

The ruffed grouse is also a terribly peculiar bird. Just when you've got done bragging about all of its survival skills it will do something incredibly stupid. Partridge seem to be attracted to particular tractors especially the ones that have a chug-chug sound to them when the motor is operating. Many people have witnessed a ruffed grouse flying up to and landing on one of these vehicles while in operation. I have always assumed this behavior to be a female partridge mistaken the sound of the motor for the sound of a male beating its wings. Perhaps this is mistaken and I am confusing this with my childhood memories of my thinking the beat of the partridge's wings to be a motor. Perhaps not, but it seems to be a reasonable hypothesis.

Recently, while doing some site assessment work for the Audubon Society I saw a ruffed grouse walking along the edge of a wetland. It was obvious that this bird was aware of me. After watching me tie wetland flags to a tree for a while the bird walked

directly toward me until he reached my foot. Then without hesitation he perched himself atop my foot and started to cluck. The pictures that accompany this article are of this bird. In case you think I'm telling a wild tale, I was fortunate to have another person with me that day, so there was a witness. We could only guess that this bird had been raised by humans (although the people at the sanctuary had no knowledge of this) and had imprinted to their behavior. On two subsequent visits the bird was still there and performed in the same manner. To be honest, I was hesitant to put this happening into this writing for fear readers would think me a wee bit nutty.

The ruffed grouse is a herbivore, feeding in spring on fruits, seeds and nuts available during the passing growing season. The bird particularly likes partridgeberry, the fruits of dogwood, various berries, and wild rose hips as they are available. During the winter the partridge can often be found in a quaking aspen, locally known as poplars or poples, eating the seeds and catkins of this tree. This particular tree species is very important to the ruffed grouse, providing up to 70% of its food during the winter months.

So, the next time you are rambling about the woods and are startled by a loud, thundering noise, and a glimpse of a gray bird disappearing through the trees, you will know you have encountered a partridge. Hunters call it the gray ghost, and with little wonder why.

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ROWE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWS

by Phillip O'Reilly, Principal

A multitude of interesting classroom activities have occurred throughout the grades at Rowe School during this month. I think that our teachers have enjoyed having relatively few outside activities (special programs, field trips) and have had the opportunity to deliver many of their own programs this month.

Students from grade six have graduated from the D.A.R.E. program again this year thanks to Rowe police officer, John Dalton. Officer Dalton delivered an exceptional program over the past four months. Our eleven graduates participated in an exciting ceremony which featured a short address from Rowe police chief Henry Dandeneau as well as skits and public statements made by many of the graduates. It is certainly my feeling this is a worthwhile program for our graduating sixth graders.

It is the intention of all our classroom teachers to deliver substance abuse education each year at Rowe School. Over the course of the next few months each of our teachers will be delivering a graded substance abuse curriculum called, Here's Looking at You 2000. Each of our classroom teachers has attended a two day training workshop in the fall and have been prepared to teach this effective and well-known curriculum to their classroom of students.

Our grade three students have once again created a model city made out of recyclable materials. Thanks to many parent volunteers, children created an amazing array of buildings that make up their African city of Ashivolta. In addition to constructing this city, each student wrote an African folk tale which they shared at an open house/exhibition recently one afternoon. Several of these stories are shared in this issue of the *Heath Herald*.

Our grade five students have recently completed their Cape Cod reports. Students have spent several months gathering data for their reports and have presented their findings to their classmates. These also will be exhibited at the school for visitors to read.

Grade four continues to study owls in an interdisciplinary unit designed by Johanna Weinstein. Children are reading the story Owls in the Family, by Farley Mowatt and have been studying the habits and habitats of North American owls. Recently the children dissected owl pellets (regurgitated, undigested balls of fur and bones) and had the chance to reconstruct skeletons of mice, voles and other small rodents.

Children in grade two have recently completed their study of Native Americans. Again, children were involved in an interdisciplinary study and found Native American legends have a lot to do with the sun, moon and stars. Students recreated the movements of the earth and moon in an activity that featured them as the heavenly bodies.

Kindergarten children performed their version of the Ukrainian folktale, The Mitten for a group of parents and the R/1 class. In addition, they wrote an adaptation of the story as a culmination to the school-wide study of Africa. Their story is entitled, The Shawl and features an African child and animals common to southern Africa.

R/1 students traveled to Worcester to visit the Higgins Armory Museum. There, the children saw a unique collection of ancient armors worn during the time of knights and castles. This trip is an integral part of the study, writing and stage production of fairy tales done by the R/1 class each year.

Members of the Rowe School Long Range Committee continue to meet on a weekly basis. We have recently met with Mark Sirulnik A.I.A., a representative from the architectural firm Alderman and MacNeish who will be completing a study of the existing facility and will complete a report on the possibilities for our building that will bring us into the 21st century. We are exploring educational restructuring efforts and hope to present a formal long range plan to the school committee in the near future. Members of the town are encouraged to attend these weekly meetings. Meetings usually occur each Tuesday from 6 - 7:30 PM.



DOMINIC CERONE & MARYROSE SHATTUCK
IN AFRICAN DRESS
(Rowe School Photo)

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CHILDREN'S WRITING:

THE GIFTS

by Paul Thompson

Once there lived a little boy named Key, in a village of Nigeria. He lived in a grass hut with his mother, father, and older sister, Liby. Key was nine years old and had black hair and black eyes. He had a pet zebra named Zip.

Key's job was to go to the market and sell coconuts. He rode Zip, carrying the bag of coconuts to the market. When Key got there, it was crowded with people. He couldn't even find a spot to set up. Finally he found one spot in a tiny corner and sat down. He gave Zip some hay and he set up a tent so he could be cool in the shade. In a while a tall man with a hat came along. He asked for a pound of coconuts. Key gave the man a pound of coconuts. The tall man gave Key a dollar bill. Then a lady came with a basket on her head. She wanted 10 pounds of coconuts. Key gave the lady 10 pounds of coconuts. The lady gave a ten dollar bill to Key. Then an old man came. He wanted 30 pounds of coconuts. Key gave the old man 30 pounds of coconuts. In return, the man gave Key thirty dollars. It was starting to get dark. Key had worked right through lunch. Key put the tent away, grabbed the empty coconut bag and rode home on Zip.

When he got home, he didn't tell his family he had \$41.00. The next day Key got up early to go to the market. When he got there, he went right over to the gift section. He got his mom a red, yellow, blue and orange shirt. He purchased a hammer with a blue handle for his father. He bought his sister Liby a green and purple bracelet. The bill came to only \$29.00.

He had \$12.00 left. He was thinking about what he could buy. Then a bright, rainbow-colored shirt caught his eye. He sprinted over to the shirt and looked at the price. It was \$12.00. He bought it.

He went home and wrapped the gifts up with old pieces of paper. He put the gifts under his bed. Key went outside to wait for his family. In a while, his family came home. He ran inside and got the presents. When his family got closer, he gave them the presents and everybody was happy.

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FULU

by Amy Armstrong, Grade 3

In the middle of the night, a man named Fulu was wandering through the grasslands of Africa. He saw a sign that said, "WELCOME TO GHANA!" A moment later he spotted a little girl picking some purple flowers in the front yard of her hut. He said to himself, "I want some of those purple flowers." Then he spotted a little boy. He was picking some coconuts. He said to himself, "I want some of those coconuts."

Fulu decided to go and get some coconuts and purple flowers near the childrens' huts. When he went to get some coconuts, the little girl came out of her hut. Fulu said, "You fool! Run back into your hut before I scare you!" She ran away fast. Then the little boy came out from his hut. Fulu said, "I will snatch your bag of coconuts if you do not go back into your hut." The little boy's mother began calling him in for bed. The boy turned towards his mother's voice. Fulu thought it was a great opportunity to snatch the coconuts.

Suddenly the loud voice of the king, Marahante, said, "Fulu will only go away if you listen to his demands. He will not go away if you do not listen."

That night the boy and girl prayed very long and hard. The next morning the children did what the king said and stayed in their huts. So Fulu went away.

THE SEARCH FOR WATER

by Joe Almeida, Grade 3

David, Maya, Andrew and Joe lived in the Sahara Desert. They all lived in a compound together. One day they ran out of water in their compound. So they had to get some for their families to drink.

They decided to go north and search for water. So they brought all the buckets in their compound. As they walked, they got more tired and more tired. They glanced at a camel in amazement. They got on him and fell asleep. The camel took them to an oasis. When they awoke, they filled all the buckets up with water. Then they rode the camel home. It took them four hours to get home with the water. Now the women can cook and everyone can drink.

THE BIG HUNT

by Adam Bradbury, Grade 3

One day early in the morning, in an old village in Nigeria, a boy named Tim and his father, Tom, went hunting for spring buck. They went to an enormous forest and hid behind a Mahogany tree. All of a sudden, a spring buck ran by. The father threw his spear skillfully at the buck. They ran toward the buck, but a lion got it first. They let the lion eat it because they were terrified that the lion would kill them. So they hid behind a nearby rock. All of a sudden, several spring buck ran by. The boy picked up his bow and put in six arrows. Then he shot quickly. He got six of them. He told every buck that he was sorry and that he needed the meat. They brought them home. The trip home was very tiring because they had to carry the bucks on their backs. When they got home, they skinned and cooked the bucks and gave some to the whole village. Then everyone was happy again.



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ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/ ACCOUNTANT REPORT

by June Day

The Selectmen are in the process of talking to department heads regarding budgets for next year. I have been analyzing the history of the expenditures in some of the municipal accounts so that we can develop a history on such things as heat, telephone, electrical costs, etc., and therefore will be able to monitor more closely what the expenditures have been and what to project.

I have sent in the infamous Schedule A for Fiscal Year 1990 to the Department of Revenue. The second time through that voluminous document was much easier. It should truly be a breeze next time.

In mid-March I attended the Municipal Accountants School at UMass. I am in the UMAS (Uniform Municipal Account System) track which is the accounting system adopted by Heath at the time the computer and software were purchased. It is the system recommended by the Department of Revenue, and is a complex and sophisticated system with much to absorb.

My current project is the Heath Annual Report for 1991. I am assembling it for the printer now so that it can be distributed to residents by the time of the Annual Town Meeting.

ASSESSORS' REPORT

by Don Dekker, Chairperson

The Board of Assessors would like to welcome a new member. Joanne Fortune was appointed in January by the Selectmen to replace Alan Nichols, who resigned due to pressures of home and work. The Board and the town would like to thank Alan for his many years of service, and welcome Joanne. Her new energy is welcomed.

We are currently changing over to a new valuation manual. The old Massachusetts manual, now defunct, is replaced by Marshall and Swift. It is a lot of work switching over to a new system. All houses in Heath will change somewhat. We have discovered that everything is going down in value. Before you shout "Hooray", and expect your tax bill to go down, remember that if everybody's goes down, the tax rate goes up. In the end your tax bill should be about the same. Sometimes it seems that all the paper shuffling we do in this office to achieve the same results is an exercise in Sisyphean futility.

Anyone in town who owns a mobile home, trailer or camper should send us, by April 30, a document which gives the age of the vehicle, and the sale price. This information will help us fairly determine the value.

Sometime in the summer we will post the new values and hold public hearings so property owners can air any and all complaints. Meanwhile, the Board continues to calculate.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

by Charles H. Mackie, Chairperson

In this publications last issue before Annual Town Meeting, and with the writer's term on this Board coming to a close, it might be constructive to make an appraisal of the last four years spent in Town Government.

A small percentage of the Town's population invests their time in the planning and management of the town's resources. An even smaller percentage takes the time to attend and vote at the several special town meetings each year.

By contrast, the annual town meeting is well attended - a happening - the only time each year some neighbors meet; particularly when the issues to be decided, or an election, are controversial.

From reading the regions local newspapers, it's easy to see that this is burn-out time. Elected officials quitting in mid-term or deciding not to run for re-election, due to the hours required and the frustrations of dealing with ever increasing municipal costs in the face of steadily declining State reimbursements of our own tax monies.

Looking back over the town's records many times during the past several years, I have an appreciation of the efforts expended by townspeople who have managed our municipal and educational services.

In planning for the future of our town, which is a corporation with a budget approaching \$1 million annually, I would suggest the town might be better served with some constructive changes.

1. Due to high voter turnout at the first session of our annual town meeting, and reduced numbers attending the second session which deals with the numbers, it might be better to push back the date of the annual town meeting to late in June from the present early May date.

2. In order to get more townspeople involved in helping run their own town, it is suggested increasing the quorum necessary to do business at special town meetings so that eight or nine people are not deciding for over 700 people.

3. It is suggested that the town consider a part time town manager to run the ever increasingly difficult task of government. The representation of the people in the direct town meeting process would not change, but it is felt additional time and expertise could be very helpful. The cost of this new process would be at least partially offset with economies of efficiency.

The writer appreciates the opportunity afforded by the voters of having served the past several years, and the help and cooperation of other town officials.

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HEATH SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

by Linda Marcotte, Chairperson

Recently voters at a special town meeting voted to form a Heath School Building Committee and allocated \$7,000.00 for the purpose of hiring an architect to do the initial feasibility study and schematic design for a proposed elementary school and other related costs of doing this study.

We have met with a representative of the Department of Education (DOE), Mr. David Backlin, who will be working with us if we decide to seek state funding. We have met with Gwen Van Dorp. Ms. Van Dorp has experience with seeking state funding for school building projects and has been helpful in outlining the various educational program options available to us for the education of our students. Some folks might remember Gwen from when she worked in the district a few years ago.

The committee has hired Joseph Mattei and Associates in Greenfield as our architectural firm for this feasibility study. Although state law did not require that we go out to bid to secure the services of the architect, we felt that a formal bid process was the fairest method of choosing an architect. Part of our process included interviewing all the architectural firms that had submitted bids.

Our bid specifications call for two school building proposals. Due to the uncertainty of state funding, we felt that we should look at two options: one for a school which would meet all of the criteria for funding from the School Building Assistance Bureau (SBAB) and one that would follow state building codes for public buildings but would most likely be smaller and less expensive to build than the SBAB building and which the town could possibly afford without the added assistance of state aid.

The committee is looking at: funding sources/options if we were to build a school, development of education specifications for the proposed school, a possible site for the school, the projected yearly operational costs of the school, and to continue to explore other options we have available for the education of our elementary students (i.e. continuing tuition to Rowe School, tuition our students to another school(s)). We visited two recent school construction projects in the local area to see how the building and classrooms were laid out and how their projects went in general.

The committee has established a regular series of meetings. We meet every Monday evening starting at 7:00 p.m. either in the Town Hall or the Community Hall (depending on the number of people at the meeting). We will be sending out a mailing shortly and holding informational meetings.

Please come to these meetings if you have an interest in the education of Heath's elementary students, if you have ideas to share or if you just want to be informed.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

APRIL

- 6 Bike-A-Thon pledge sheets available at Library or Park Committee member
- 11 Easter Egg Hunt & Puppet skit Heath Union Church
- 12 Play & Musical Heath Union Church, 10 AM
- 17 West County Good Friday Service Heath Union Church, 7:30 PM
- 19 Easter Sunrise Service Bray Road, 6 AM
- Heath Choir presents "Beyond the Tomb" Heath Union Church, 10 AM

MAY

- 2 6th Grade Car Wash Location TBA 10-2
- 3 Bike-A-Thon Heath Center, 2 PM
- 4-8 Teacher Appreciation Week
- 4 Town Elections Sawyer Hall, 12 - 7 PM
- 5 Annual Town Meeting Community Hall, 9 AM
- 10 Mother's Day Service Heath Union Church, 10 AM
- 17 Bike-A-Thon Raindate Heath Center, 2 PM
- 18-23 6th Grade Washington Trip
- 31 Talent Show & Potluck supper Heath Union Church

JUNE

- 13 PTP Garden Tour Rowe School, 10 AM - 4 PM
- 27 Heath Union Church Auction Fairgrounds, 10 AM - 4 PM

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FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

by Earl Gleason, Chief

Emergency calls for this period started with a call for the fire department to assist the police department with an auto accident on Burrington Road on January 26. Seven firefighters responded to this incident. On February 19, two EMTs and two firefighters assisted Charlemont Ambulance in transporting a lady on 8A with a leg injury. Two EMTs and a firefighter responded to Colrain to assist their ambulance as they were short of EMTs. This incident occurred on March 3. Two days later six firefighters responded to a chimney fire on Bray Road. This fire was out on arrival. Just to prove it can happen to anyone, eight firefighters responded to the Chief's residence on March 18 to a grass fire that was started from a permit fire that got away.

Two drills and two Association meetings were held. Several members attended Friday evening and Sunday morning class on ice rescue held at Ashfield Fire Station and Ashfield Lake. Members attended one or both sessions were Bob Giard, Mike Smith, Mary Howe, David Thane, Ken Thane, Tim Lively and Earl Gleason.

The chief attend six meetings and did two inspections.

Two of the interesting upcoming activities will be two Massachusetts Firefighters Academy classes coming to Heath. The first will be a Breathing Apparatus class to be held on April 25 and 26 at the Heath Fire Station. On the evenings of May 19 and 21 a Massachusetts Fire Academy class on Flammable Gases will be held followed by a live burn drill at the Massachusetts Fire Academy drill yard in Stow, Ma. Deerfield Academy donated a bus to transport the students from this area to the Academy at Stow. Both of these classes are open to all firefighters from Massachusetts.

Have a safe and fire-free spring.

HEATH PARK COMMITTEE NEWS

by Judy Thrasher

To set things straight, the Annual Cross-Country Ski Race is not dead. We have every intention of continuing our Annual Race. Lack of snow and the frustration it caused was the only reason for the cancellation. As soon as the snow returns, so will the race. We look forward to a snowy winter.

To raise money for the park, we are sponsoring a Bike-a-Thon. Mark your calendars for 2 PM May 3 (May 17, raindate). We have a 15 mile course of moderate difficulty for adults and children. A 4 mile course for adults and children unable to do the longer more strenuous course. This shorter course can be repeated as often as time allows to enable the miles to build up. The more miles travelled the more money raised. Also, a course for toddlers and preschoolers wishing to participate will be measured per telephone pole. A grand prize and other prizes will be awarded to those raising the most money for the park.

If you can't ride, how about sponsoring someone to ride for you? We hope you all turn out for a fun day of bicycle riding. The preschool will be selling food after the Bike-a-thon. Come out and enjoy a wonderful day and support the park.

Pledge sheets will be available April 6 at the Library or from Park Committee members.

TOWN CLERK/TAX COLLECTOR HOURS CHANGE

The town clerk/tax collector will have new hours until June 8, 1992. The hours are: Tuesday, 4 - 9 PM and Saturday, 8 AM - 12 PM. There will be no hours on June 6.

After June 8, 1992, Ms. MacDougall will return to her regular Monday, 9 - 11:30 AM and Wednesday, 8 - 11:30 AM. If you would be interested in having Ms. MacDougall continue offering Saturday hours once a month after June 8, please let her know.



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SELECTMEN'S REPORT

by Art Schwenger

The budget for FY93 is now in that undefinable stage after departmental hearings where needs and wants are presented and before decisions can be made or finalized because of unknown levels of support from the state. Most presenters requested level funding or small increases reflecting changes in costs or activity. Schools will show increased costs at Mohawk and Rowe and decreases at Franklin County Technical School due in part to changing enrollment levels. But the figures are not yet firm. The income from the state that would be used to offset costs in education, highway, and other areas is as yet undetermined. This will mean that the budget items will probably need to be held until a continuation of the May 9 Annual Town Meeting. Mark your calendars, Annual Town Meeting, Saturday May 9. Continuation of Annual Town Meeting is tentatively planned for Saturday, June 27. Please plan to attend both of these important meetings.

The Selectmen are considering replacement of the photocopy machine in Sawyer Hall. This machine is getting old and showing signs of the good use that the town and the public have made of it.

Mr. Edward Shapiro has made an offer to donate land to the town. The parcel is the Burnt Hill Extension past the Steinbock residence. The owner is interested in having the land maintained under conservation. The Selectmen have communicated their thanks and possible interest by the town. A meeting between the Selectmen, the Planning Board, other town officials and the landowner will be the next step.

Shortly after the announcement of Yankee Rowe Electric Company's closing plans, the Selectmen voted a resolution expressing concern for the employees, families and others affected by the decision to close. The resolution offered the board's cooperation in working to support them and suggested "aggressive measures" need to be taken to offset the hardships the closing may cause.

The resolution was sent to elected officials, the NRC and YAEC. A response was received from YAEC outlining their plans for helping their employees.

The Selectmen signed onto a lead paint abatement program operated by the Franklin County Regional Housing Authority. This will mean that individual residents of Heath will be able to participate in the program if they desire.

The Small Business Loan Committee was formally established and the process for getting loans was approved. Anyone interested is encouraged to contact chairman John Musacchio or members, Nancy Burrington and Bruce Cromack. The procedures for application and loan processing are nearly complete.

HEATH CONSERVATION COMMISSION

by Bill Lattrell, Chairperson

Conservation Commission business continues to be slow. During February the Conservation Commission did three site visits. These visits were to determine if any wetlands filings needed to be done by prospective applicants. It was determined in two of the three visits that a Request for Determination was required. Also during early February it was determined that a wildlife habitat evaluation had to be performed before any water was drained for the lower Mohawk Beach Estate's pond. The law requires that for land under water bodies any impact over 5,000 feet requires such an evaluation. The applicant was informed of this, but has not responded to this requirement yet.

At the end of February and beginning of March the Conservation Commission received two applications. One for a brook crossing and buffer zone work on Rowe Road. A second for buffer zone work on Underwood Hill Road. Both of these are in association with single family residences. The Conservation Commission also reviewed a change in plans for an Order of Conditions that was already issued for a single family residence on Route 8A. It was determined by the Conservation Commission, that the change fell within the parameters of the original Notice of Intent and Order of Conditions, with the addition of a siltation barrier needed to protect nearby resource areas.

This spring the Conservation Commission will be reorganizing its structure. We have requested the addition of two associate members, the function of which will be to participate in Conservation Commission proceedings, hopefully preparing themselves for stepping into someone else's shoes if and when a current Conservation Commissioner decides to step down. the associate members cannot vote, but can participate in all other aspects of hearings, meetings, site visits, etc. We may also reorganize our Commission officers at this point in time.

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CANDIDATES' STATEMENTS

RICHARD R. GIARD - SELECTMAN, WRITE-IN

I would like to make myself available as a write-in candidate for the position of selectman. I have served the town for fourteen years in previous elected and appointed positions. I feel that I have a working knowledge of town government. If you should consider my candidacy for selectman, I would appreciate you writing my name, Richard R. Giard, and putting an X after it, in the box for selectman. Whatever you decide, please vote on election day, May 8, 1992. Thank you.

ROBERT T. MARKERT - CONSTABLE

During the past two years, I have had numerous occasions to serve the town in the capacity of constable. The duties, though not overly time consuming, are vitally important to the town. I have a strong sense of commitment to the town and would like to continue fulfilling the requirements of the job. I would appreciate your vote on May 8, 1992. Thank you.

JOANNE FORTUNE - ASSESSOR

I would like to be a tax assessor for the town of Heath. My credentials, integrity and temperament make me well suited for this coveted position. Please vote for me in May. Thank you.

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....continued from page 1

How have we determined which roads should be discontinued? The Planning Board voted a set of criteria for any road to make it onto our list for discontinuance. First of all, any roads with trees growing in them (believe it or not, there are several such roads) would be considered. Next, roads without electric service would get a look. Finally, the Board felt that any road that had fallen into such disrepair that it had become impassable to most conventional automobiles would be considered. With these criteria in mind, we have ridden or walked many roads. At present, we are trying to determine which ones we feel will need to be taken off the books. The Board will then ask town meeting to make a determination on these roads.

The Planning Board is aware that certain problems may arise. Landowners who up until now have held lots along a town road, would no longer have the required frontage on a public way for a building lot. Another problem might be that landowners, or others accustomed to using the land, would be concerned that access to their land would be lost. The Planning Board hopes to ease concerns over the issue by asking that roads being discontinued be voted in as Statutory Private Ways. This would allow landowners, skiers, snowmobilers, hikers, etc. legitimate access to the land in question. The town will need an engineering study to determine the exact boundaries of the Statutory Private Ways.

Discontinuing roads can be a thorny issue. Many people will have varied opinions for and against this issue. That is why the Planning Board will be setting up hearings and informational sessions to allow for a full range of comment before town roads will be voted on by you, the people of Heath.

As always, we would appreciate your comments at our regular meetings.



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