



VOLUME 17 NUMBER 6

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1996

# HEATH HERALD

HEATH'S FIRST NEWSPAPER

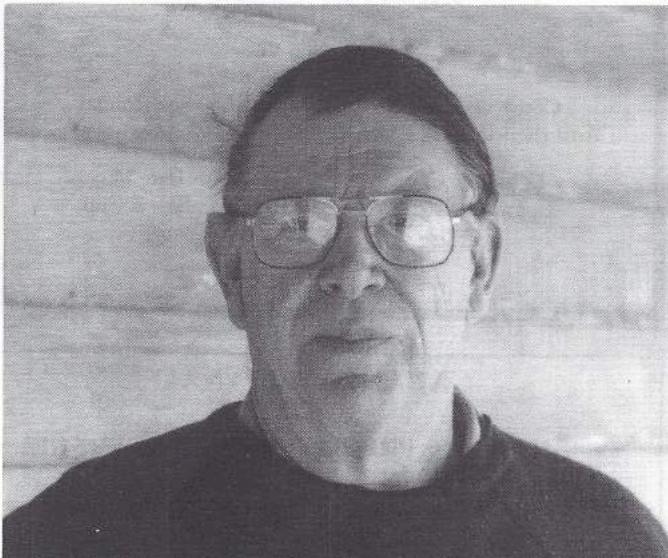
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## EARL GLEASON RETIRES

Earl Gleason, a native of Heath, is retiring from his many duties in town. He has, over the past 21 years, acted as Fire Chief, Forest Warden and Civil Defense Director. As of February 1st, he will have been Fire Chief for 21 years, Forest Warden since 1957, and Civil Defense Director for a number of years (he's the fourth in 21 years).

When he was first Fire Chief, it was quite different than now. "During my first year", he said, "it seemed like something was burning down every time I turned around." There was much less paper work, fewer worries about liabilities and a great deal more interest from young people in volunteering for the Fire Department, with 30-40 then, as opposed to 18-19 on the present roster. Before pagers, they had a kind of phone tree, in which 4 Red Phones were in town; whoever answered was responsible for calling people on that phone's list. There also wasn't as much "tech" and they had much less equipment. The department covered all of Heath, and they had only a few ambulance calls per year; 50% of their calls now are Emergency Medical Situations.

*(Continued on page 3)*



**EARL GLEASON**  
(Photo by Deborah Phillips)

## ALLI THANE RETIRES

Heath's library, established in 1894, has had a long line of librarians serving the town. The town of Heath has had the pleasure of having Alli Thane hold that position not just once, but twice. She first served as Librarian during 1960-1961, when she began her days by getting wood from the back woodshed room, and lighting a fire in the library's wood burning stove. Alli, in the winter, wore white gloves there, not because of elegance of fashion, but because the books were cold. At that point there was no phone and the pay was \$125 per year.

Alli left after a year to work elsewhere, but certainly did not leave behind the library. She served as a Library Trustee until 1985, when she again became Heath's Librarian. She has remained there until now, greeting patrons with a cheerful hello, and helping us find the right book, even if we weren't quite sure what it was.

She recalls her years as librarian as busy, wonderful years. She was able to meet new people and has watched as the children have grown from toddlers to teens. "That is what I will miss the most", she said. She

*(Continued on page 3)*



**ALLI THANE**  
(Photo by Deborah Phillips)

## THANK YOU

We would like to express our thanks to the people of Heath for their prayers, support, help and good wishes during my husband's illness. It is truly wonderful to know that we live in a town where people care and watch out for one another as we have witnessed firsthand in the town of Heath.

At this time we would also like to express our gratitude and thanks to Jack Cable and our highway crew for the "great job" they are doing in clearing the roads and making them safe to travel. On December 2nd, when my husband was released from Baystate Hospital, we turned from Route 2 at the A frame cottages to find that Charlemont had not plowed and we had to drive through about a foot of snow. Once we hit the Heath line, the roads were perfect. Thanks guys!

Wishing everyone a safe, happy and healthy New Year.

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

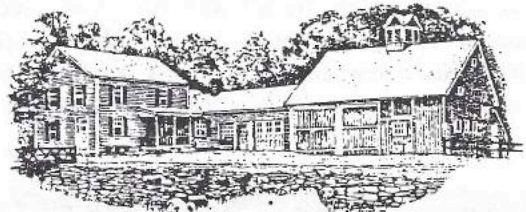
Following the recent deluge of snow that has befallen the area, I have received calls from many area communities concerned about the excessive costs involved with the removal of snow and ice. The budgets of many small towns like Heath have already been depleted of allocated funds for snow removal. This situation jeopardizes other critical local services that are also funded by the town. It is for this reason that I will be urging my Senate colleagues to pass a supplemental budget to provide assistance to all affected municipalities. This is of increased concern this year as we are not yet halfway through the winter season.

I have received several petitions in response to the statewide drive that Representative Kelly and I launched in effort to increase funding for regional school transportation. Support for this initiative has been very positive and I look forward to advocating for full funding in the upcoming budget deliberations. Please continue to submit your petitions if you have not already done so.

I will keep you apprised as to the progress of my efforts. As always, if I can provide you with any further information or assistance in the future, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Jane M. Swift  
State Senator

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## ALAN'S ALMANAC

	PRECIP	SNOW	AVERAGE
NOV	6.21	09.0	4.69
DEC	2.47	23.3	4.46
JAN (14th)	1.92	31.0	3.98
JAN (14-29)	4.68	01.0	

(Continued from page 1)

As Forest Warden, he was responsible for any outdoor fires and for fire permits. He and Howard Thompson worked in tandem, he as Forest Warden and Howard as Fire Chief, for a good number of years. As Civil Defense Director he acted as coordinator for emergencies such as floods, wars...when asked if he was responsible for the lookout tower at Brown's, he laughed and said that was actually from his father's time as chief observer during World War II, when he watched for airplanes. The tower never actually was used for that purpose, because the need passed. The former lookout was at the Gleason's farm in South Heath; the first time Earl ever used a telephone was to call Boston to report an airplane sighting over Heath.

His retirement was not necessarily his idea. Among the primary reasons was that his doctor recommended no more stress. Earl responded that the fires were less stressful than the paperwork in between them; decisions made at a fire are either right or wrong, they are not drawn out. He will continue his business, located in Heath, of selling fire equipment.

He said he has enjoyed his 21 years serving the town, "no question about it". He has had good people working for him, a number of them have been on the Department as long as he has, and he looks back fondly on the friendships he's made.

With a history like this one, the people of Heath will sorely miss Earl's presence in all these areas. The town of Heath has been a safer place thanks to Earl Gleason. Heartfelt thanks and best of luck to you, Earl!

## TREE WARDEN

by Jack Cable

Senator Jane Swift has announced the "Operation Green Plant 1996 Program" sponsored by the America The Beautiful Fund. Volunteer and educational groups can get free seeds to beautify neighborhoods, fund raising plant sales or community gardens. She suggests that the seeds can be used to grow food for the needy or provide beautiful plants for senior citizens. "This program can certainly brighten the day of many individuals across the county," Swift said. Contact Senator Swift's office at 413-442-5240 or my office at 337-4462 for an application form.

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(Continued from page 1)

has thoroughly enjoyed them, to the point of "spoiling them", and feeding them crackers from her little tin on the window.

She won't be leaving the library completely, as she has said she will volunteer if asked and will help with the book sales. She is even staying on a bit longer while a new librarian is chosen, and will help with that person's training in the library.

Within this new season of her life, what will she be doing? Alli said she will now have a chance to spend more time with her husband Ernie, work around their farm, do some haying, enjoy her family, work in her garden, and "maybe even have time to read more books!"

For over a decade Alli's warmth and her nurturing soul in the library have made it a wonderful place to visit and a delightful place to learn. We thank her for her presence in our lives as Heath's Librarian. Good luck Alli, and here's to many monster tomatoes, and lovely flowers in abundance!

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Dave Howland, a Heath selectman since 1988, has announced he will not seek re-election when his term is up in May. He explained that he has reached the stage in his life when he wants a little more flexibility in his schedule. He will still be involved in the Heath Historical Society and in town affairs such as the Finance Committee whenever he can be helpful. He wishes to thank the town officers and employees and the citizens of Heath for their fine support and cooperation over the years.



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# WILD RAMBLINGS

by BILL LATTRELL

## FROZEN FRIEND, FROZEN FOE

Since snow does not seem to be in short supply this winter, I thought it might be interesting to briefly explore its benefits to the natural world. Some of you might be pretty sick of the white stuff already. Digging your car out, your driveway out, and even an occasional kid out can be trying, at best. I know I have trouble even beginning my snow removal chores since I often have to find my buried snow shovels that were irreverently cast aside by my offspring after the last snow removal process. Usually this problem gets resolved when in the spring scores of snow shovels can be found in my yard. But despite these inconveniences to the human world, snow can be a remarkable benefit to the natural world. It can also be a tremendous burden.

The natural world, particularly animals, are captured by snow. They cannot retreat into a warm house to escape it. They cannot ignore its presence. The snow becomes part of their daily routine. Humans sometimes fail to recognize that snow has *character*; it can be dry or wet, frozen or slushy, deep or shallow, packed or loose, and even sharp or dull. The Inuits, who live with snow as part of their everyday natural environment have dozens of words that all describe the different characters of snow. The snow's character may determine how difficult or easy a time a particular species adapts to its' winter environment. For example, dry snow is an excellent insulator and can actually protect many animals, birds, mammals, and insects, from very cold temperatures. Insulation means energy conservation, which can actually decrease the need for forage. On the other hand, wet snow can soak an animal, lower its body temperature and cause it to react poorly to a severe drop in outdoor temperatures. The need for energy increases under these circumstances, which increases the need for food.

Many animals in our area are well adapted to deal with the snowy New England winters. The ruffed grouse grows combs on the sides of its feet each winter to help it walk on top of the snow, the short tailed weasel turns white which acts as an excellent camouflage during the winter landscape, a snowshoe hare turns white and has specially adapted paws that enable it to traverse the winter climate on top of the snow depths.

Hoofed animals like our white tailed deer have a very difficult time during deep snow winters. Generally they yard up in conifer or hemlock stands. In these areas much snow is intercepted by the needles of the tree and this reduces snow depth on the ground. Additionally the dense stands act as a wind break and provide branch tips as forage which both conserves energy and produces energy. In deep snows, heavy snows, and wet snows hoofed animals have a difficult time. They become easily bogged down by snow depth, cannot find adequate forage, and can fall victim to predators, such as coyotes, that can easily maneuver over frozen snow while they are reduced to a few escape options due to the winter climate.

Some animals actually experience improved shelter during the winter. Conifer bows bend with covered snow to create coveys where animals can escape from the elements. Small rodents, particularly voles, create snow tunnels where adequate food supplies can be found along the forest floor.

Recently, while exploring a favorite meadow in Heath, I

ambled upon a natural winter hideaway. An area of multiflora rose and barberry adjacent to a pine stand thicket had been dramatically altered by the winter weather. The pine thicket was down wind of the area of multiflora rose and barberry, so snow had blown into the area and piled up to great depths. The weight of the snow had bent the rose and barberry bows so that they created a snow covered tunnel through one end of the meadow. Peering in from the end I could see a multitude of deer tracks through the tunnel. The tunnel was almost devoid of light except from the one opening through which I was looking on the west end. There, the deer had managed to find a quonset shaped igloo that completely protected them from the elements.

The problem of finding adequate forage in general is a problem that plagues almost all animals at some point during the winter. In a year like the one we are having now with deep snows following a poor acorn, beechnut, and nut crop, most ground feeding birds and mammals struggle to survive. Bud tips, branch ends, bark, evergreen ferns, all become valuable forage. While many of these are not favorite foods, they are capable of sustaining wildlife populations with low to moderate energy needs. For this reason many animals are moving around as little as possible as a matter of energy conservation and survival.

While feeding birds is considered acceptable by all wildlife experts except the most radical, feeding deer and other large mammals is much more controversial. If food is placed in poor locations, tempting deer and other animals to expend large amounts of energy to consume the food supply, this practice may do more harm than good. First, it may take them away from protected areas. Second, it may expose them to increased predation. Third, if energy expended exceeds energy consumed, then there is a net loss, severely endangering the animal.

For this reason many wildlife experts do not recommend mammal feeding programs, particularly if it is not possible to provide the food supply through the entire winter. It is possible that a noble effort may have harmful results. One should only attempt such a program under guidance and with much consideration.

Fortunately, winter will eventually come to an end as it has for millennia. When Spring arrives it will be celebrated by wild life and human alike. The healthy, strong wildlife that encounter spring will appreciate the warm weather, adequate food supply, and longer days. For me, I'll celebrate the finding of scores of snow shovels and plastic sleds strewn across our homestead.

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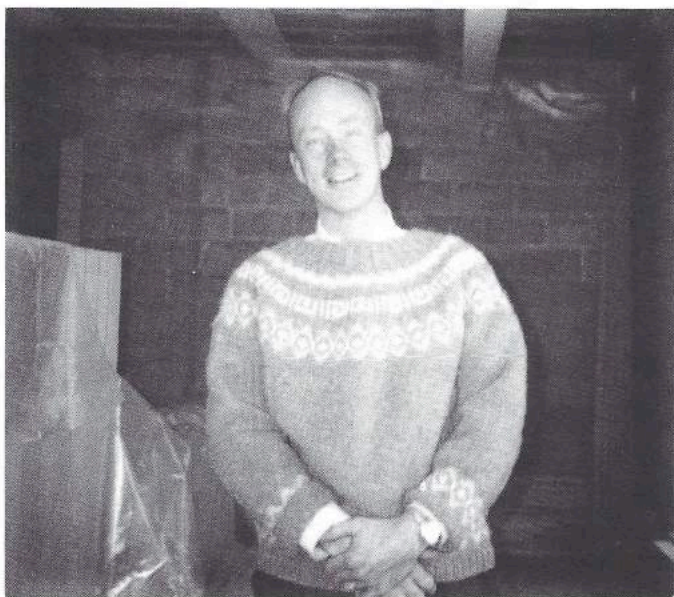
337-5716

## MEET THE PRINCIPAL

by Doug Wilkins

Heath citizens will soon have the opportunity to get to know Phil O'Reilley, the new Heath elementary principal during a series of small informal coffee table meetings. The meetings will take place in private homes throughout Heath beginning in early February through March. Each "host home" will invite 10 to 12 people for refreshments and a chance to talk with Phil about school issues that are important to them. The children will have an opportunity at a later date to meet their new principal. These meetings will also give Phil the opportunity to sound out the community on ideas he has and give him direction on equipping the school and hiring the staff. Information will be presented on the capital campaign to fund computers and the play structure. These meetings should be a wonderful forum to help shape the future of the school and make the new Heath elementary school a model community school -- our school.

Every effort will be made to extend invitations to all Heath residents. Anyone wishing to make sure they receive an invitation can call the superintendent's office at 625-0192 and leave their name and address. If you have any questions Phil can be reached during the day at his temporary office in the Heath town hall at 337-4934.



PHIL O'REILLEY IN THE NEW SCHOOL  
(Photo by Sue Silvester)

## HEATH PRESCHOOL NEWS

by Suzanne Crawford

This winter sure got off to a snowy start, and the preschoolers have been taking full advantage of it. They have shoveled and sledded, have romped and stomped, and - in the very light, deep snow - have almost swum through it. We have had a couple days when the snow was perfect for snowmen; and what a special treat for very young children to successfully make their own "Frosty"! The first snowfall provided me with a vivid reminder of just how young the littlest preschoolers are: One was quite hesitant about taking those first steps on this cold, slippery white stuff - and it struck me that the time elapsed since their last snow experience was equivalent, proportionately, to 10 or 20 years for an adult. Three year olds are so capable in so many ways that it's easy to forget how young they are.

There are a few special winter activities that we haven't yet done, but hope to do soon. We often look forward to a visit from the Highway Department with the snow plow. Considering the work load that Nature has given them in the early part of the winter, though, it seemed to make sense to wait. Also, we hope to do some cross-country (or should I say "cross-meadow") skiing soon.

The preschool is planning to sell lunches at the Heath Ski Race again this year. Bring your hungry appetites to the race! A big thank you to all the parents and community members who help out with this fund raiser.

I am beginning to collect names of potential students for next year's preschool class. Children who are three or four by August 31, 1996 are eligible to attend. Please let me know of any eligible children, even if they may not choose to attend. You may reach me at work at 337-4847 or at home at 339-4265. Pre-registration will be later in the spring.

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## SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

by Budge Litchfield

After years of meetings and hard work, members of the building committee are enjoying a period of inactivity. Inside the new Heath Elementary School though there is plenty of activity! Recently I had an opportunity to walk through the building and I was deeply impressed. It is BEAUTIFUL, in an under construction kind of way. With much of the sheetrock in place and some of the rooms even sporting a coat of paint, light from the windows and skylights made the interior bright and cheerful. The combination of this light and the large common space in the middle created a wonderful feeling of open space. Some of the unique design features of the school are beginning to become apparent. In some of the west side classrooms the cathedral type ceiling with high interior windows to allow in light from the skylight create an atmosphere as much like a living room as a classroom. The light oak trim around the numerous windows adds to this effect.

There is, however, plenty of work yet to be done. With the January thaw clearing most of the snow off the roof the final little bit of roofing work might be able to be completed. This would allow more work to be done in the gym and mechanical areas. Work on heating and ventilation ducts, plumbing and wiring is moving along nicely. A design consultant has begun working with a team of administrators (including our new principal, Phil O'Reilly), Brian DeVriese (the project architect), committee members and others to research, select and purchase furnishings for the school. Sue Silvester and a group of librarians and parents are considering matters relating to library layout and equipment.

So, while building committee members get some time off, the project we began continues to move toward the completion date of June first and the opening of school in September.



HEATH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
(photo by Deborah Phillips)

## HEATH UNION CHURCH NEWS

by Pastor Roger Peace

Not many were singing, "Let it Snow, Let it Snow" after several snowstorms in January, but most of us were fretting about what to do with any more if it came. So, God in his goodness, sent some warm days and a little rain (maybe not so little) and washed most of it away. Now we can once again sing - or maybe we better wait till next year to sing again.

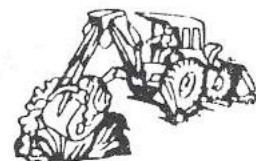
February for the Heath Union Church plans to be a very exciting and busy month as new ideas and projects are beginning. Several committees are busy planning and preparing financial reports, memorial records, and a potluck supper; the Music Committee is ordering a new musical for Easter; and work at the parsonage and church is being planned as well. The youth are getting ready for their trip to Schroon Lake, NY for Snow Camp weekend on Feb 23-25. This year will be our largest group with either 11 or 12 teens. The Deacons are also busy with new challenges which they begin this month. We have much to be thankful for and look forward to.

My family as well as the entire church are most grateful to the Heath Ladies Aid for the gift of a new kitchen and bathroom floor at the parsonage. Also - we are grateful to Howard Crowningshield for his willingness to help install the floor as well as the new carpet for the study to save cost. The church could not exist without the willingness of many volunteers as they share their time and talents. As the Pastor, I am very thankful for each one that gives in any way to God's work. May you be most blessed!

Eric Sumner may be calling you to share your musical talent as he looks for singers for our Easter Cantata in April. The Pastors of several churches will be meeting soon to plan this year's Good Friday service. This has been and I am sure will continue to be a rewarding, exciting and encouraging time for all who attend.

Keep in mind that we still have Sunday School each week at 9 AM and church service at 10 AM. We would like to see you there this week and every week. The last week in December we accepted three new members into the church; maybe you would like to join us as well. Call Pastor Roger if you are interested, or even if you have any questions about the church. Simply call 337-5755 anytime. Have a great day - everyday. Remember to have an attitude of gratitude!

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## OF HERBS AND HEIRLOOMS

by Laurie Wheeler Burrington

### CALENDULA OFFICINALIS

*Calendula officinalis*, Hens and Chicks, Marygold, Pot Marigold, fiore d'ogni mese, are all names (thank heavens for its latin description) for one of the most versatile, and favored, of herbs we can grow. *Calendula* is a hardy annual, and a member of the *Compositae* family; she enjoys almost all soils except extremely wet ones, prefers to be planted in a sunny spot, and flowers from June until frost. That is also the period during which the petals should be collected.

Historically, *Calendula* has been associated with the Virgin Mary and Queen Elizabeth, and has been grown in cottage gardens for centuries. Even the Egyptians, Greeks, Persians, and Hindus used *Calendula*, for decorative or culinary purposes, or for strewing about their temples.

Its properties as an herb are many, as well as being a pure delight to grow. It may be used in the culinary arts, as a dye plant, decoratively in potpourris, and in cosmetics and healing. The yellow-orange petals may be used fresh or dried. When dried I have been able to store them for over a year; too much longer, and they begin to lose their potency.

The fresh petals may be added to your green summer salads, and when cooking the petals give a golden color and slightly spicy flavor to whatever you add them to. They can be used with rice, soups and stews, meat or fish, baked goods, egg dishes, fruit salad, milk dishes, or as a garnish to any of the above.

One of the safest herbs, it is also one of the most useful. According to *The Holistic Herbal*, *Calendula* has a number of "actions"; anti-inflammatory, astringent, vulnerary, anti-fungal, cholagogue, and emmenagogue.

I have read of cases where it has been used to aid digestion, help heal ulcers and gall-bladder problems, but check with a practicing herbalist before you use it for these serious internal problems. As an emmenagogue it is reputed to help with painful menstruation, and as part of a tea it may be used with peppermint to aid digestion.

I use it most often externally, as it is one of the best herbs for treatment of skin problems. Because of that it is a must as the base herb when making salve or soap. When used as a salve, poultice, compress, or a rubbing oil, *calendula* both soothes skin inflammations, such as insect stings, minor burns, bruises, or wounds, and acts as an anti-microbial. In its salve form it is excellent for chapped or cracked lips and for "gardener's hands". In a pinch out in the garden you could even just chew the petals a bit and rub it on your skin.

If *calendula* isn't already in your herbal first aid kit, give it a try. It is easy to grow, and is available in a number of varieties, but the old fashioned yellow-oranges are most suited to herbal use.

### Richard A. Sumner

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## CHANGING LIVING STANDARDS IN BEIJING

by Pat Leuchtman

As a polisher (editor) of Women of China English Monthly it is my job to make sure the Chinese translators are translating grammatically and correctly. Sometimes I need to remind the translators that the readers of the magazine are not Chinese and that you cannot mention the May Fourth Movement (a student reform in 1919) or Qing Ming (the April Festival of the Dead) without giving a brief explanation. Sometimes I have to ask the translators to explain the logic of their sentences.

Recently I ran across an odd passage in an article that I was polishing. "In Nantong (in 1910) people led an easy life, but they were not wealthy. Seeing this, Zhang worried and decided to set up a training school."

I asked my colleague Chen, why Zhang was worried. I thought an easy life, even without wealth, did not seem like much of a problem.

Chen heaved a sigh. "It is difficult to explain. In those days, people in the city didn't have to work hard. They would get up, do their chores, or do some work, but they would eat and then women would gossip with their friends, and the men would sit outside and smoke their pipes. They didn't work very hard, but they didn't have much money. They didn't want anything else, but they didn't even know what there was to want."

*They didn't even know what there was to want.* That phrase has obsessed me.

It is no longer true that urban Chinese don't know what to want; the people of Beijing are learning to want more and more. I don't blame them for wanting good housing, running hot and cold water, heat in winter, and good meals every day. However, as I see more and more of Beijing, I know that not even these basic needs are being met.

I don't blame them for wanting telephones, washing machines, refrigerators, TV sets and hi-fi systems. I don't want to do without my appliances; why should I expect anyone else to do so?

However, another story reminded me that in 1994 the State Council issued a policy statement encouraging families to think about buying a car. This means the government is actively encouraging people to want an item that is extremely expensive, and that generates corollary expenses, gasoline, repairs, garages, and insurance. The theory is that developing a desire for cars will push the development of a prosperous Chinese economy.

The Budgeting government is working to accommodate the ever-increasing number of cars and commercial trucks. New highways and scores of complicated flyovers have been built in the last few years, but it does not appear that much money has been spent to increase the capacity of the overburdened public transit system which means that while people are being encouraged to think about buying cars, their everyday commute is only getting more difficult.

No, I don't think not knowing what to want is a problem any longer for the urban Chinese.

After a lot of discussion about why the easy life was so worrying, Chen and I decided to change the phrase. It now says, "In Nantong people had a low standard of living."

For the purposes of the story, I think we made a good decision, but as China joins the rest of the developed world in a rush of mad consumerism, I have serious concerns about the way we define "low" or "good" standards of living.

Nowadays people in Beijing say they have no time. They are always busy. People in private businesses are earning good salaries; they are working very hard for long hours. People who are stuck in state enterprises where they pay is not very good are always looking for ways to moonlight and make extra money. The effort to make money leave them feeling harried, and it's common to hear people give the excuse "I have no time". Sounds like home.

So, how do we define "low" or "good" standards of living. Of course, we need adequate food, shelter and clothes, and what we define as adequate is changing all the time. The question is what else do we NEED?

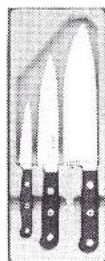
How do we measure wealth or poverty? Aren't I rich if I don't want fancy clothes, fancy cars and fancy furniture, even if I don't have a lot of money?

We need things, and our countries need a healthy economy so that we can earn the money to buy those things. But we also need time. We need time for our families. We need time for our communities. We even need time for ourselves, not time to be productive, but just time to be. If we don't have that time, our families and our communities suffer; our country suffers, sometimes at great financial cost to fix the problems we didn't have time to prevent.

China is eagerly rushing to become modern. Unfortunately this means the Chinese are also rushing into those modern problems that they may not have thought about.

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## Green Thoughts

by

ELSA BAKALAR

Two months ago, here in this column, obviously needing reassurance myself, I wrote "...but come December 21, we can count our gains in daylight, minute by minute, and things will begin to climb up again...watch your spirits rise with the sun."

Well, for me, it's happening. There was a wonderful moment one afternoon recently when, by turning my head, I could watch a sun set and a moon rise in a cold, clear sky. And on a night of high cloud, there was a sky so full of diffused pearly light that I went out to see if an outside lamp had been left on. The shadows of the old apple trees were suggestions only but, for a moment, from under a hedge something turned its head towards me and I felt I had been caught in a car's headlights. So many times, in the past few weeks, I have felt joined to the natural world and glad to be living where I could be aware of it.

There will be cold, and storms, and snow and ice still to come, yet I cannot escape the feeling that some trees are, in a sense, rehearsing for spring. The apple trees, so recently black against the snow, are showing that familiar faint rose tint that they have in early spring, and recent rain has deepened the color. Willows, always the first in the season to promise color, are already a haze of sharp yellow-green. Reason tells me it's too early, but

is it possible to have an overture to spring - a curtain tantalizingly raised - to be lowered again until the cast is assembled on stage?

Without the familiar birds that come to the feeders, it's hard to know what month it is. Where are all those little birds, not seen here since before Christmas? Even juncos are not in evidence, and I feel a certain nervousness. The hungry hordes of evening grosbeaks haven't made their noisy decent onto the deck, and the bandit blue jays have been quiet for a week. I'm grateful for the antics of a pair of white-breasted nuthatches and two wood peckers, the hairy and the downy, perching on the suet at the same time, letting me be sure of the difference between them. (If anybody wants any mourning doves, I have them -- and to spare.)

I have just spent a few days in Ohio. In one hotel, where I was lecturing at a perennials conference, there was an enormous commercial show of garden products attended by nursery owners, garden center operators, and the like. Let me tell you, our gardens are poor naked places! It seems that the gardens of people "in the know" are about to be furnished within an inch of their lives. If it's not teak three-piece suites, it's fountain sculptures with water streaming from unexpected parts of the anatomy. There are gazebos, tool sheds I could live in, even Greek temples reduced to scale. Nary a plant, however.

If it's flowers and color you're hungry for, catch the New England Flower Show in Boston, March 9-17 or, closer to home, the Indoor Flowering Bulb Show, at the Lyman Greenhouses of Smith College, March 2-10. And watch your spirits rise with the sun.

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## 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**

### SOUNDS NOT COMMON ANYMORE

I grew up at a point in time when there were a host of most pleasant sounds to strike the ears. These old time noises were unique to a local area that might not be common 30 miles distant. Those faithful teams that logged and farmed in the area that was my native home were a great asset to that farming community. A very soft spoken neighbor logged with three Belgian horses and a raised voice from him was a rare thing. The daily conversations of a good teamster with his team were a treat for me to listen to.

I've always enjoyed the sound of working chain. Runner chains on a sled as they jingled loose on the road and the comforting sound when those chains are doing the job they were intended at holding back the loaded sled. When a chain binder is used to bind a load a chain will fairly sing with the extreme tension placed on it.

It is most uncommon to hear the strike of a chopper's axe today. I can recall seeing a neighbor chopping some distance away and was troubled that I couldn't figure why I could see the swing but some time passed before I heard the strike. It was a long time before this small bairn understood that the time lapse was caused by the distance.

The sound of a distant sawmill is most pleasant. To understand the workings of a sawmill makes for a greater appreciation of the distant sound. In years past, it was most easy to find a portable sawmill where a load of sawdust could be purchased.

In this area, the pleasant sound of an ensilage cutter chopping bundled corn filling upright silos was the sound of an activity I greatly enjoyed. When the corn was well developed, the rattle that hard corn made going up the silo filler pipe was music to most farmers' ears. I was barely old enough to have seen the corn cutting done by neighbors trading works as it was called. The farm women would serve large meals at noon, dinner time and how the food was consumed. That's an era of my past that is most fondly imprinted in my memory.

I never ceased to be in awe of those farm teams as they came up to the silage cutter making a variety of strange noises and they would stand as the long corn was fed into the cutter and listen for the command to step ahead. They could sort out these commands above all the other noise.

A most pleasing sound in my memory is that of the ratchets in the wheels of horse drawn mowing machines as turns were made and backing up. In my years as a teamster, there are few tasks with a team that are more enjoyable than cutting hay with a finely tuned mower and a smart walking team. Every job should be as rewarding.

I will always consider myself very fortunate to have lived and worked with and for those who knew these simple pleasures of a rural workday life.

### HEATH TOWN ELECTIONS

Town elections will be held on May 10, 1996, at Sawyer Hall. Candidates are needed for the following offices: Selectman (one three year term); Assessor (one three year term); Moderator (one three year term); Constable (two one year terms); Planning Board (one five year term); Finance Committee (two three year terms; one two year term); Library Trustee (one three year term); and Dog Officer (one one year term).

Nomination papers may be picked up from the Town Clerk, June Day, through Wednesday, March 20, on Monday through Thursday, 9 AM to 2 PM at the Town Office or contact Mrs. Day at home, 337-8369, to make other arrangements. Nomination papers need a minimum of 20 certifiable signatures (Heath voters) and are to be turned in to the Registrars by Friday, March 22, at 5 PM.

This is a Presidential Primary year and the polls will be open from 7 AM to 8 PM on March 5, 1996. This is a primary so that "unenrolled" voters may choose a party ballot. Those with a party designation will vote their party ballot. A surprise on the official Democratic ballot is the names of five Heath residents running for the newly organized Heath Democratic Committee.



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## 8A'S FUTURE

by Laurie Wheeler Burrington

What is in store for Route 8A? This was discussed at a public forum late in 1995 at the Heath Town Hall. Present were Linda Dunleavy and Bill Allen from the Franklin County Planning Office, Stacey Rainey from Senator Swift's office, Edward Tagiuski and Rudard Longron both of the MA Highway Department, and John Merrigan, as well as people from Heath, Hawley and Charlemont.

A statement prepared by Alastair Maitland, who was unable to attend due to illness, was read. In his statement he expressed the concerns and opinions of a group of citizens of Heath, Charlemont and Hawley. The fear was expressed that the State Highway Department would pursue its own agenda without involving and regarding the wishes of the communities surrounding Route 8A.

The statement outlined a brief history of 8A. In 1993 Heath, Plainfield, Hawley and Charlemont sought funding for the "reconstruction" of 8A through their towns. The Heath Board of Selectmen made it known that they were in support of the "reconstruction", but that they "wished to retain the rural character of Heath". The manner in which the Windsor-Savoy portion of 8A was carried out, "as having fulfilled the highway designer's objectives, but at an enormous expense and with extensive visual and environmental impacts" caused concern. 8A was then resurfaced, which was termed a "short fix". The matter came up again in 1994 in connection with the Bissell Bridge conflict in Charlemont.

His statement goes on to question the sudden interest in 8A, what role 8A plays, and if the state has any idea of its functions within our community? His statement concludes by saying that the town, county, and state must decide upon the role 8A plays.

Ms. Dunleavy proceeded to explain the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to the assembled group. There are projects slated for fiscal years 96, 97 and 98. Heath roads under TIP are Avery Brook, Adamsville, and 8A. Heath's Route 8A is listed as a future project. Ms. Dunleavy stressed that "the planning board commit

themselves to protecting the rural character of roads", and that they think we need to work together.

Mr. Longton said that the 8A project came up before the Review Board and was tabled; until Heath takes action it will remain tabled. They have gotten projects to their final stages and been forced to end them due to opposition.

Because the subsurface problems were not resolved by the 1993 repaving, work will eventually need to be done to correct them. Mr. Longton said he thought that the recent repaving of 8A in Heath would be good for 8-10 years with good maintenance.

It was asked if the designers would be as flexible with 8A as with Avery Brook. All roads undertaken by the TIP must meet certain Design Standards, in terms of road width, safety features, curves, etc. Although able to be somewhat flexible in which changes to their standards may be made, they can make no promises except to try to work with a town in what its citizens wish for their roads. They do try to "build to fit", but a road with too relaxed design standards could cause liabilities for the engineer responsible. The curves Mr. Tagiuski thought were dangerous are the same curves that lend charm to a country road, said several Heath residents.

Martha McCutcheon mentioned a petition signed with 77 names requesting that 8A be widened and made into a "super highway". She mentioned the historic aspect of 8A as the original Jacksonville Stage Route.

Brian DeVriese suggested that a study be done in which important natural, historic features be identified. When asked if monies are available, Ms. Dunleavy responded that the county could help with a resource inventory, but could not do "a full blown" report. It was recommended that the town meet and decide what it wishes to do with 8A or meet with the other towns which would be affected by an upgrade of 8A to decide on how to complete an upgrade based on the condition of each town's segment of 8A.

The Board of Selectmen suggested that at the next meeting or two, the Board would meet with a representative group of people to prepare a proposal for Route 8A.

For those who are interested the meeting was recorded and a copy will make its way to the Heath town archives.

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## TAX RELIEF IN SIGHT FOR HEATH

by D.F. Howland

Heath taxpayers will see the benefit of a \$148,000 grant from the Department of Education in their tax bills which should be in the mail by early February. The grant was made possible by the Legislature's enactment of a Foundation Reserve fund (also known as "pothole" money) to help towns having problems with the new Education Reform law and meeting their financial obligations. Heath qualified for several reasons among them the fact it was forced to build a school, it has the highest residential tax rate in the State and it had not received proper credit for Excess Debt in the last two years.

Excess Debt refers to the difference between what the Town of Heath spent on construction of the new school on a per pupil basis as opposed to what is spent on the average by the State. Credit is supposed to be given the Town by the Regional District, but in this case the newness of Education Reform and errors in computation caused the oversight.

The effort to obtain some relief from the State started nearly two years ago when it was obvious our tax rate could bump up against the \$25/\$1,000 tax threshold and cause severe budgetary problems. A Tax Fairness Committee (TFC) was established in 1994 with members Harvey Carter, Leighton McCutcheon, Arthur Schwenger, Debra Porter and Jenifer Giandalone. Bob Viarengo was appointed to the Committee this past year. While the Committee examined a number of measures to bring lower taxes to the Town in a fair way, the focus soon was directed to State aid because the Town of Heath simply does not have other resources to draw upon. The BOS, the TFC and Catherine Heyl of the MTRHSD attended several meetings in Boston with various officials and also prepared detailed reports to justify special consideration for Heath. In the process the error in Excess Debt was uncovered. Senator Jane Swift and her staff as well as Representative Steve Kulik were instrumental in helping the Town. (Steve offered his assistance when Carmen Buell resigned her office and Heath was without a representative.)

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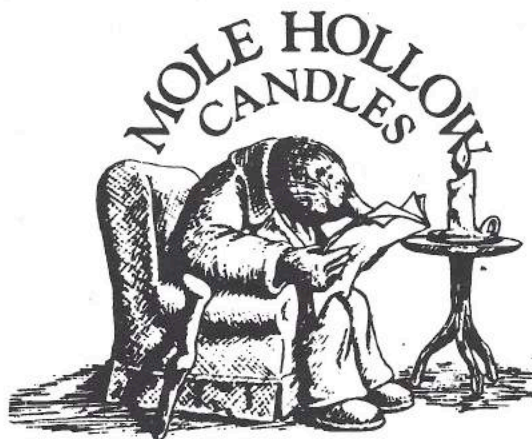
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On January 16th the BOS held a joint meeting with the TFC, Finance Committee, Assessors, Town Accountant, School Committee and Catherine Heyl to discuss how the money should be spent. After considering a range of options it was decided to use all the money as "estimated income" and report it on the Recap Sheet. In effect this reduces the tax rate by about \$3.40 per thousand dollars of valuation. There was a clear consensus of the group in this regard. While the Town has \$99, 836 in Free Cash, it was agreed it was best to keep this in reserve until this Spring's budget session was completed.

The Foundation Reserve money represents about two years worth of Excess Debt credit plus the \$25,000 error in the tax bills for FY 95. Thus, it was thought that the account with the taxpayers was brought into balance for now, so to speak. Having said that, it was agreed to continue our efforts to obtain help from the State. The nickname of "pothole" was coined because it was thought to be a one-time thing, but like real potholes the money apparently will keep coming back. We have been told the Reserve Fund is to be

level funded at \$4.5 million for FY 97. Because the Town had been led to believe it would have received aid without the Excess Debt error we thought we should have received twice the amount actually awarded. Also, the School District has a responsibility in the financing of the Excess Debt credit which it avoided (in error) these past two years. For these reasons we will continue to seek appropriate redress of what we see as inequities in the treatment of Heath at both the school district and State levels.

We expect the tax rate for this year to be about \$19.40, but next year it could be back up to nearly \$23. Consequently, it is important for all of us to pull together to seek ways to stabilize our taxes at a reasonable level.



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## SELECTMEN'S REPORT

by D. F. Howland

Just when we thought the operating staff was in fine shape, we had three resignations of key personnel. First, Earl Gleason announced his retirement from the positions of Fire Chief, Forest Warden and Director of Civil Defense effective February 1, 1996. Earl has been Fire Chief for 21 years and Forest Warden for 38 years! His dedication and perseverance in performing his duties cannot be duplicated. Next, Tom Rabbit resigned his position as Police Chief in December due to increased demands on his time and energy of his position as a full time Environmental Policy Officer. Tom made many positive changes in the Police Department over the last three years and will be hard to replace. The BOS appointed Michael Smith, a sergeant in the Department, as Acting Chief. Lastly, Allie Thane retired as Town Librarian effective January 11, 1996. The Library is simply not going to be the same without her. The BOS has initiated a recruitment effort for Earl and Tom and the Library Trustees have selected Laurie Weeler Burrington as the new Librarian. Interested parties should contact the appropriate supervisory group. Hilma Sumner and Jack Cable attended a meeting with State officials in Colrain regarding the use of 4 x 4 vehicles in the Catamount State Forest and Heath's John M. Shapiro Land. Hilma, with the support of the BOS, took the position of not supporting the use of these vehicles on the Shapiro Land and also indicated that Burnt Hill Road would be discontinued for the most part at the Annual Town Meeting in May. Primarily, the concerns of safety, maintenance and preference for less damaging uses of the land were expressed. The issue is far from over, however; it is expected there will be further study and discussion this Spring about the matter.

Rollo Kinsman attended a meeting of the Mohawk Municipal Advisory Council where issues of reimbursement of school transportation costs and vandalism were discussed. There appears to be a campaign underway to get 100% reimbursement from the State for busing costs.

The BOS agreed to a comprehensive approach to discontinuing certain roads in Heath with the Planning Board. This project has been studied by the Board for the past several years and is ready to bring to the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) in May. There will be two public hearings to review data prior to the ATM.

The BOS requested the Planning Board renew its efforts to create a master plan for the Town. Some ten years ago this objective was considered, but it was decided to get professional zoning and wetlands regulations in place first. This was accomplished and then the school construction issue consumed energies. Now that the school will be ready this fall and our tax rate is the highest in the State, it is vital to address long term economic and town need issues. Also, land use and open space need further definition. A master plan can address matters such as these.

Treasurer Kris Nartowicz has spent considerable time and money resolving tax title problems with properties in arrears. Kris has held auctions where possible and the BOS has helped with regard to some particularly knotty problems.

Town Coordinator Joyce Karpinski continues to keep us on top of meeting our report requirements. She is now coordinating the preparation of the Annual Report and arranging meetings with town department heads to develop the budget for FY 97.

## PERCS, PERMITS AND TRANSFERS

### PERCOLATION TESTS

Perc testing has been suspended until next April, except for repairs.

### BUILDING PERMITS

No building permits were issued this period.

### DEED TRANSFERS

Donald R. and Theofany Georges to Donald R. Georges, Mohawk Estates, lots 19 and 20. No consideration.

Donald R. and Theofany Georges to Donald R. Georges, Mohawk Estates, Lot 22. No consideration.

Donald R. and Theofany Georges to Donald R. Georges, Mohawk Estates, Lot 21. No consideration.

James L. and Jean R. Goyette to Michael T. and Mary V. Gay of Chicopee, Deer Run Path, Lot 10, \$1,500.

Town of Heath to Nancy Palmer of West Springfield, 19 Cascade Drive, \$1,400.

Town of Heath to Walter Oleski III of Rocky Hill, CT., 27-28 Navaho Lane, \$950.

Norman R. Sessions to Norman R. and Marsha L. Sessions, Jacksonville Stage Road, 13.28 acres. No consideration.

Mark Duane Scranton to International Paper Company of Park Ridge, NH., Route 8A, \$45,000.

Clyde and Ruth H. Churchill to Richard A. and Hilma A. Sumner, 39 Route 8A, \$50,000.

Birdie M. Jiguere to Birdie M. Jiguere and Brenda L. Guarna, Mohawk Estates. Lots 32-34. No consideration.

Marcel L. Frechette and Steven J. Zevitas to George H. and Eileen A. Tougas, Mohawk Estates, lots 13-17, \$4,500.

Town of Heath and Heath Free Public Library to New England Forestry Foundation Inc., of Groton, Dell Road, \$2,000.

David L. and Nan A. Gibbons by United Bank, formerly of United Savings Bank, to United Bank, Rowe Road, \$36,285.

Robert B., Leola M. Goodell and Mary B. Smith to Michael Herzig of Colrain, Route 8A, two parcels, \$35,000.

## HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT REPORT

by Jack Cable, Superintendent

Since November we have experienced a beautiful winter wonderland in Heath. The snow starts to "look dirty" and it snows again. As everyone knows, the highway crew has been busy keeping up with the clearing of roads for safer travel. I commend the crew, relief drivers and private hire pickups for being there when needed. Relief drivers are John Churchill, Mike Smith and Bob Markert. Pickup drivers are Doug Crowning-shield, Mike Peters and Alvin Hillman. Where to put the snow was a constant dilemma (until the rains of January 12). With the use of the loader with a large plow and the Chevrolet truck with the wing we have managed to keep the snow banks back. Some persons have criticized our road clearing efforts - "We are driving too fast, snow hitting mailboxes and filling driveways." Our trucks and plows are larger and more powerful than in the past - these vehicles can throw the snow not only out of the roadway, but back away from the road for lower snow banks, banks farther back on the edge of road for better snow drift control, visual safety and water runoff. With the amount of snow and trying to get the snow back, mailboxes and driveway problems are part of the winter scene. Most of the mailbox damage is done by snow from the plow hitting the box. According to the Postal Department, not only is the mailbox supposed to be behind the edge of the road, but able to withstand snow hitting the box at 50 MPH! One person in town (on 8A North) has a plywood barrier just before his mailbox to protect it - this is common practice in other parts of the country and a good one. Keep your mailboxes and paper boxes clear - not only can we see them better, but the mail and paper delivery people deserve your respect. One mail carrier recently gave the department a cake for doing such a good job on the roads.

Thanks to the residents for honoring our notice of not parking vehicles in the road. We have had only two incidents of this behavior. One almost cost us a tipped over truck. The driver tried to get by a car parked in the road and slid into a deep ditch. Five hours later with the help of a wrecker, loader, and truck we got it out - not without experiencing damage to the truck, sander and plow - our '93 International was the victim - there is nothing as disheartening as seeing a great piece of equipment fall victim to an incident like this. We are trying our best to keep the roads safe for everyone to travel. That is our job and highway safety is number one!

The opposite of snow hit us January 12 as it got warm and rained causing our dirt roads to turn to mud and water. Every dirt road experienced ruts and washouts. We totally lost one road - Burnelle Hill Road from David Thanes to 8A. There was two feet deep by seventy-five feet long of mud across 8A. Two ditches one foot deep by three feet wide down the hill was the result of water runoff with the snow banks not letting the water get to the ditches and culverts. Burnelle Hill Road from

A to DeLisle's will be closed for the remainder of the winter. Travel is accessible by way of Maple Road to Burnelle Hill near Delisle's, then north to Sadoga Road.

The transfer station is running smoothly - thanks to Bud Kaempfer who also uses his truck to plow out the area when the highway crew is taxed on other matters. Our recycling is doing OK. We are trying to get an extra recycling box through a grant program. I've attended the monthly SRRI meetings. Recently the communities agreed to install a metal reclaiming unit in the ash part of the operation. By recovering the metals thus reducing the ash tonnage the landfill where the ash is deposited will last longer - as much as 50% reduction in ash tonnage is expected. We will also receive money for the metals - Everyone saves!

Downsizing in Government is affecting our highway system. The State wants to "consolidate" the Highway Districts again - combining District I and District II. This means there will be only one office to handle all of Western Massachusetts. We of the Highway Superintendent Association object to this move and urge citizens to voice their objections to our representatives. Representatives Kulik and Merrigan and Senator Swift are to be applauded for their diligent work in representing us in Boston. Congratulations to Senator Rosenberg for his appointment to the Ways and Means Committee Chairman - a strong voice on our behalf. With these people representing us, Boston will realize that the State line is not at Route 495.

I've been attending Baystate Roads Programs on pavement management and subgrade materials and drainage. The Avery Brook culverts project will be starting soon because the bids have been awarded; we expect work to commence soon as the project has to be done by June 15. The Avery Brook Road project is still in the design stage by the District I engineers headed by Bill Silvernale. Much work has to be done to improve and make this a safe highway. Public hearings will be

*(Continued on page 15)*



JACK CABLE IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT  
(Photo by Sue Silvester)

*(Continued from page 14)*

held in conjunction with this project.

Remember the speed limit doesn't count on ice and snow - save a life - **SLOW DOWN!**

P.S. January 27 threw us another storm - rain - freezing rain! This was the most nerve racking storm to date! I slid down Flag Hill even though the one ton truck had studded tires on all wheels and new "ice" chains. Took me over an hour to get to the highway garage. First I had to get Dohn to work, then Bud to the transfer station - he couldn't traverse the ice either. Then an emergency (person hunt) at end of Number Nine Road near Vermont line; then sand Sumner Stetson because of power outage at Doug Wilkins; then got Fred to man the phone; Dave arrived to help sand - sent him to help with power company truck in a ditch on Burnelle Road Extension. Don't know why he went that way after being told to go Sumner Stetson which was sanded for him; then

Dave finally got to Adamsville Road which had four vehicles stuck including a collision which required a police officer - Dispatch finally called to have officer Margo Newton get to accident scene. She lives on Town Fair Road so we had to sand to get her and the cruiser out of her yard; then there was a fire at Fournier's on Ledge Road. Ice covered roads with disabled cars were prevalent and we did the best we could. Luckily our men had no problems that required extra help. We could not hurry and did not - we were all needed throughout the Town. The final problem was a stuck overhead door at Firehouse. I called a service man who responded immediately. It was a long day and we finally got all roads sanded. Some people called about getting to work, but our crew had roads sanded in many areas before surrounding towns. Even 91 was closed for awhile. I hope you had a good day. I slept for twelve hours Saturday night!

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## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Chris Seaver married Julie Ovitt of Charlemont on May 27th, 1995. The ceremony was held in Dickinson's field. Members of the community and family were present. Family and friends came from far and wide, including California and Italy. The weather held for a gorgeous Spring day.

Arlo Seaver is living and working out in Silverthorn, Colorado doing Rescue and Avalanche Control at Copper Mountain. When his Mom last talked with him there was 76" of snow.

Jesse Seaver is at Mohawk, and writing for the Heath Herald and the West County News (WCN). He is helping at WCN and learning about newspaper work.

Juliette Seaver has just rented office space above McCusker's Market where she is continuing her acupuncture.

Two young men of Heath have been accepted into the National Guard. Joseph Thane of Brunelle Road will report to Fort Benning, Georgia in August. Joseph is the son of David and Phyllis Thane. Andrew Saunders of Sherman Road will report to Fort Benning, Georgia in June. Andrew is the grandson of Jim and Joyce Lawrence. Both boys are seniors at Franklin County Technical School.

## MILESTONES

by Edith Royer

Born January 17, a daughter, Kayla Jean, to Melissa J. (Bruffee) and Michael E. Royer of Shelburne Falls - granddaughter of Anita and Robert Bruffee and Helen and Ernest Royer, all of Shelburne Falls, and great-granddaughter of Helen Weber of Shelburne Falls and Edith Royer of Heath.

Born January 3, a daughter, Maya Louise Gary to Janet Gary-Kerstetter and Gregory L. Kerstetter, of Northampton - granddaughter of Dorothy and Richard Gary of Heath, Gayle Kerstetter of Arcata, CA., and Theodore Kerstetter of Hampton, NY; great-granddaughter of Dorothy Williams of Seattle, WA.

Born January 10, a son, Gage Zachery, to Rebecca L. (Decker) and Thomas Hatch of Warwick - grandson of Betty L. Decker of Heath and Shelly and Carroll Hatch of Winchendon; great-grandson of Mildred Decker of Heath, Ruth Thompson of Orange, Eugene Hatch of Warwick and Myrtle Hatch of Shelburne.

Ronald B. Corey, 71, of 110 Burrington Road died February 5 at Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield. He was born in Lakeland, Florida, November 27, 1924, the son of Bert and Iva (Park) Corey. He'd been a resident of Heath since 1950. He was a veteran of World War II and served in the European Theater. Prior to retirement in 1984 he was a teacher at Mohawk Trail Regional High School. He started teaching there when the school first opened in 1968. Previously he taught four years at the Charlemont High School. Since retiring, he was self-employed as a carpenter and wood craftsman. He was a member of the Heath Union Church. Survivors besides his wife of 46 years, the former Ruth Sumner, include one son Alan R. Corey of Heath, one daughter, Dawn M. Maltby of Shelburne Falls; two brothers, Robert Corey of New Paltz, NY and Frederick "Paul" Corey of Charlottesville, VA; one sister, Nada Stetson of Richfield Springs, NY; four grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. Burial was in South Cemetery in Heath. Memorial contributions may be made to the Heath Union Church, Organ Restoration Fund, Heath, 01346.

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