

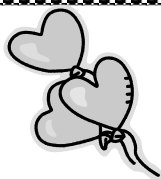
# HEATH HERALD

Heath's First Newspaper

75¢

Volume 23, Number 6

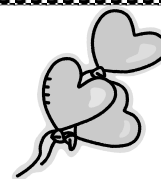
February/March 2002



## *A Valentine to Heath Volunteers*

***“Local Treasures...”***

***who give so much to our community***



We applaud them for the thousands of hours in time, energy, and thought which they give tirelessly. And by volunteer, we mean all who serve the town in any capacity, very much aware that all town positions have a volunteer component.

Heath elders who donate their time so freely are greatly appreciated and deserve a special mention.

Knowing how important and necessary volunteers are to our town, our hope is that this great tradition will long endure.

### **Dates to Remember**

Last day to obtain nomination papers from the Town Clerk:

**March 20, 2002**

Last day to submit nomination papers to the Town Clerk:

**March 22, 2002**

Last day to register to vote: **April 19, 2002**

Town Election: **May 10, 2002**

Annual Town Meeting: **May 11, 2002**

### **Town Positions To Be Filled**

Positions	Term	Incumbent
Selectman	3 years	Brian DeVriese*
Assessors	3 years	Henry Leutchman*
Moderator	2 years	Douglas Wilkins*
Finance Committee	2 years	vacant
	3 years	David Howland*
Planning Board	5 years	Donald Schnelle*
Library Trustee	3 years	Jane deLeeuw*
Constables	1year	Charles Kaempfer*
	1year	Robert Tanner*
Dog Officer	1 year	David Cote*

**\*The incumbents have indicated that they plan to run**



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## Town Office Hours

Transfer Station: 337-6640

Hours: Summer (after Memorial Day) Monday, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., Wednesday, 1 p.m.-5 p.m., Saturday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Winter (after Labor Day) Monday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Library Hours: Monday 4 - 8 p.m., Wednesday, 12 noon - 7 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Post Office: 337-4934. Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Town Office: 337-4934

Town Garage: 337-4462

Heath Elementary School: 337-5307 or 337-5308

Board of Assessors: Monday, 1:30 p.m.

Tax Collector: Monday, 7 - 9 p.m.

Treasurer: Wednesday, 8- 11:30 a.m.

Town Coordinator: Monday, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Tuesday, 2-10 p.m., Wednesday, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Thursday, 9 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Police Department: Tuesday, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

*Town Boards - meeting dates at Sawyer Hall unless otherwise posted.*

Selectboard: Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.

Board of Health: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m.

Contact: Dawn Peters, 337-4014

Conservation Commission: 3rd Tuesday, at 7:00 p.m. Contact: William Lattrell, 337-5792

Finance Committee: Contact: Dave Howland, 337-4980

Library Trustees: 2nd Wednesday, 7:00 p.m. Contact: Deb Porter, 337-4715

Planning Board: Contact: Deborah Phillips, 337-8513

Zoning Board of Appeals: Contact: Dennis Peters, 337-4014

## Heath Herald

**Managing Editor**

**Design and Layout Editor**

**Copy Editor**

**Typographer**

**Business Manager**

**Advertising & Circulation**

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**Contributors**

**Reporters**

Lea Banks Bohrer

Eileen A. Tougas

Jane deLeeuw

Diane Cote

Deborah Phillips

Deborah Phillips

Dianne Cerone

Elsa Bakalar, Joanne Fortune, RN, Pat Leutchman, Carroll Stowe, Susan Todd

Marcella Lively, Sen. Andrea F. Nuciforo Jr.

Charlene Churchill, Dave Howland, Edith Royer, the Selectboard

The Heath Herald is a nonprofit newspaper staffed by volunteers and published six times a year. Donations are tax deductible and are greatly appreciated.

**THE HERALD DEADLINE FOR THE JUNE/JULY ISSUE IS MAY. 10, 2002. Photographs, drawings, and articles are the property of the Heath Herald unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Call (413) 337-0217 or E-mail Lea at [saleda@crocker.com](mailto:saleda@crocker.com).**

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### Weather Data by Alan Nichols

2001	One-Hundredth of an Inch of Precipitation (Rain or melted snow)	Inches of Snow
Jan	77	10
Feb	241	22
March	692	54
April	143	
May	425	
June	586	
July	479	
Aug	114	
Sept	702	
Oct	123	
Nov	106	
Dec	271	9

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## A Trip Down Memory Lane

By Marcella R. Lively

As I was working in the post office last fall, a man with a porkpie hat came to my window. He said his name was Sandy Blackstone and he asked me about the Charles Martin place and whether it had been sold. I told him I wasn't sure. He then said he used to go there in the summertime with another young man as helpers for Mr. Martin.

After talking to Becky upstairs, he left the building. Up the street, he was photographing the scenery, when Fred Burrington approached him and started a conversation with him. It came about that he mentioned his girlfriend of 45 years ago Mary Lively, and that they had both gone their separate ways and lost track of each other. At that, Fred told Sandy that Mary Lively's sister-in-law, Marcella Lively, worked at the post office down the street. He zoomed back in to see me!

Our previous talk had been about the foliage, and it now switched to Mary! I told him she lived in New Jersey and was unattached at this time. The widest smile came over his face and his eyes simply danced with joy! He started telling me about their going to the dances on summer evenings at the Community Hall on weekends. Mr. Martin gave them the time off and he and his friend would ride their bikes to the center of Heath. He saw Mary and another girl standing outside on the steps leaning against the black pipe railing. He told his friend he wanted to meet the girl who turned out to be Mary!

He carried a picture of her in his pocket over his heart and had hoped that like the movie *Somewhere In Time*, which he related to, that they someday would be reunited.

Sandy and Mary were married on those same steps December 28, 2001. A fine young man, Justice of the Peace, Mr. Todd Sumner, performed the honors.



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### Connections

## Marcella Lively

By Pat Leuchtman

When anyone leaves a town position after 20 years, we all take notice. This is doubly true when it is our postmistress Marcella Lively, who has retired. For the past 20 years Marcella has been at the heart of Sawyer Hall, and indeed at the heart of the town, always good-humored, always helpful, always there, six days a week!

Marcella was born and raised in Manchester, NH. Her cousin Pat, married to Fred Lively, decided to do a little matchmaking. Pat and Fred invited Marcella to visit them here in Heath and also arranged for Paul Lively to stop by. At that time, Marcella was working as a telephone operator so she said she was able to call long distance with no charge. Paul wrote to her; she called him, and a correspondence ensued. When they had known each other for nearly a year, and winter was going to arrive soon, they decided they did not wish to be apart anymore. They were married in October 1961 and lived in the Porter house next door to Paul's family's house that first winter. Then they set up housekeeping in a little apartment they arranged upstairs in that family house where Marcella still lives.

In 1963, the first of seven sons was born, first Malvin, then Matthew, Dominick, Adam, Anthony, Jeremy, and Jason. Matthew and his teenage children, Alex and Maria, still live at home as do Jason and Adam and, at least temporarily, Jeremy.

Marcella was kept pretty busy as a farmwife and mom, but she was active also as a Sunday school teacher and occasionally wrote for the Heath Herald. "I also had a little baking business for a while. I baked bread, pies, and doughnuts for Peter's Store and the Corner Store in Charlemont." Then when the post office was moved into the newly renovated Sawyer Hall in 1982, Marcella was hired as postmistress. The library also reopened in Sawyer Hall, and Marcella said there was always a good-natured group in the building. She used to have fun with Edith Gleason when she was the librarian, and then with Alli Thane and Don Dekker when they worked in the library.

Once when she was fairly new on the job, Mike and Elsa Bakalar came in to see about getting a post office box. Marcella said she ushered them into the entryway to show them the boxes, "and as soon as I heard the door shutting, I knew I had locked us out. I grabbed the door but it was too late. It was locked. I got so upset, but we went next door and Bob Gruen was home and he had a key so we were able to get back inside." Another time a lady came into the entry hall and started calling, "Hello, hello." I was sorting mail and thought she was on the



("Marcella Lively" continued on page 15)

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## **Much Excitement At The Heath School**

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By Susan Todd

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**Water Grant Awarded.** On January 16, the school received a phone call from a program director at the Massachusetts Cultural Council notifying us that we had received a \$15,460 grant from the Creative Schools Program to fund our whole-school integrated study of water. The grant application was titled: "Water Culture: Integrating the Arts and Sciences in a Study of a Local Watershed." The staff collaborated with Heath resident Ted Watt of the Hitchcock Center in Amherst to craft the application and sought the help and advice of many artists, writers, and scientists in the area. A school wide thematic study was one of the School Improvement Goals developed last spring for implementation this year. According to the program director, our application was awarded the highest number of points by the panel of judges from the 64 applications received from around the state. Twenty-nine schools received grants totaling \$300,000.

**Water Brainstorming.** Even before we were notified about the grant, the staff had begun working with Ted Watt to bring together all our ideas for the teaching and learning about water and to lay out our plans for the rest of the year. The Heath School will present an interactive water museum on March 21 and 22 in the Open Space. We are inviting the entire community to this event to share in the projects, experiments, and displays that the students will be creating. More information will come your way as we go forward with this very exhilarating study.

**Finally Strings.** After much fund-raising and planning, we are at last ready to go forward with our Strings program. Diane Kraichnan will begin instructing over 20 adults and children in the study of violin, viola, and cello on Wednesday afternoons through the end of the year. This has long been a dream of the Heath School to provide this opportunity for children, and we are grateful to everyone who has made such significant contributions to make this experience possible.

As you know, the state is experiencing difficult financial times. We are doing everything in our power to provide an excellent education for our students despite all the constraints that we must face. We thank you for all of your support and, once again, encourage each of you to come by the school and visit so that we can share with you all the great learning that is taking place here.



## **Letters to the Editor**

Dear Editor,

My name is Bernard Lively. That was a nice write-up about our brother Paul. I thanked Marcella for sending us your paper. The first eighteen years of my life were spent in the wide open spaces with clean fresh air, the smell of the earth and on the farm. How fortunate to have grown up in such a wonderful place, at the time called the Lively Homestead, in the hometown place called Heath. One time there were five Livelys that practically owned #9 Road, (joking, of course). Reading through the paper, some names were familiar. I wish I could mention all the names of that time, but there is one, Howard Thompson. My wife Rita spent a good part of her young life in Savoy. Our lives changed in a big way when we got married in 1946. Williamstown has been our home since 1949. The Dell and the Spooner place were always my favorite places. At that time I had driven over all the roads, and it's been a nice journey back in time reading your great little paper. Please tell me, would I get lost in Heath today?

Yours truly,  
Bernard & Rita Lively

---

To the Editor:

Recently assigned to the Heath Union Evangelical Church, my wife June and I are serving with a group called Village Missions in the associate program. The associate program is structured like an interim pastorate, so we fill the gap during the time the church doesn't have a permanent pastor. We are the only couple in New England serving in this capacity.

In the five years we have been serving with Village Missions, we have been assigned to five churches including the church here at Heath, one in Vermont and three in Maine. The duration has been from two months, the shortest, to two years, the longest.

I was the assistant pastor in my home church in Connecticut and working full-time at Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics. A once-only early retirement was offered, which allowed me to start serving with Village Missions on a full-time basis.

The two pastors who preceded me here at the Heath church also served with Village Missions.

The church is currently involved in a major construction project of putting in a basement facility which will include Sunday school rooms, a kitchen, and two bathrooms.

We are here to serve this community in any way that is needed. Please don't hesitate to contact us if we can be of service to you in any way.

Respectfully,  
Rev. David N. Roselund



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Phone: 339-4472



## Green Thoughts

by

ELSA BAKALAR

Here come the catalogs! Interest in home gardens is suppose to pick up when times are challenging, so I had expected to find that the 2002 catalogs would be "Back to Basics." Not necessarily; a quick preview of the ones that have been crowding my mailbox since early December shows an enormous range in message and style.

Some serious-minded growers quote Thomas Jefferson's dictum that bringing a useful plant into culture and distribution is the greatest service to mankind. Other seed and plant houses continue to promote the one-upmanship idea of being the first to obtain some exotic (and pricey) plant that will "make your neighbors green with envy." I don't see our hilltown gardeners in that light at all. Chances are that their neighbors will chat companionably over the garden fence (or, more likely, on the post office steps) and offer to share a piece of this or that.

There's a lot in some catalogs about the multiple benefits of growing your own food, or at least some of it. The cost is often not all that much less, but it's true that the food can be fresher and tastier. The other, less tangible, benefits may be even greater - healthy and absorbing activity, especially valuable in a time of anxiety and, perhaps, the joy of growing enough to give to family, to friends, and even to people you will never know.

The Garden Writers of America "Plant a Row for the Hungry" program continues to be a great success, providing tons (yes, literally tons) of food to people who can no longer grow it nor afford to buy it. If getting your produce to the needy seems complicated, then remember your local Food Bank and other organizations that undertake to distribute food. I'll have more on this when we're nearer to garden harvest time but, for now, remember to order enough seed for that extra row.

Few people have a good word to say for February. Joseph Wood Krutch has provided me with a favorite tag line; "The worst charge that could be brought against New England is not Puritanism, but February."

Looking on the brighter side, February has famous birthdays, Abraham Lincoln's and George Washington's, plus school vacations fitted in around them. I expect this will be a year of patriotic displays (think Heath Fair in August) so flower growers will want to look out for annuals in red, white, and blue. I say annuals because they are easy to come by, but there are some perennials, too, that will give solidity to your groupings.

Red is not a problem. Think of fiery *salvia*, *cosmos*, *lychnis* Maltese Cross (a perennial in my garden), *beebalm*, and, in a little shade, the brightest *impatiens*. Remember, it's scarlet you want, not magenta, not pink (save that for another February celebration, Valentine's Day!).

White is no problem either. Think of *cosmos* Purity, *sweet william*, *double baby's breath*, *sweet alyssum*, *white columbines*, *tiny white zinnias* (*zinnia angustifolia*) Crystal White and larger and perennial, *Shasta daisies* and the early border *phlox* Miss Lingard and the latest *phlox* of all, World Peace.

Now we come to blue, which can be more difficult. It's a "true blue" that's needed (not purple, not lilac - just look at a bright new flag). Here are a few suggestions: *cornflowers*, *deep blue lobelia*, *dwarf delphinium* Blue Butterflies, and *pansies* (but remember, you want BLUE not pale lilac.)

Here's one thing that's good about February - for gardeners, anyway. You really can't do anything out there. You can look all you like, and you can dream, perhaps even plan, but your home free for a month or so. Enjoy it!

## The Guardian Spruce Trees

By Deborah Phillips

There's a stand of spruce trees that line up like sentries along our home's northwest corner. They are particularly grand and impressive in winter, the rich green in high contrast to the white snow on the ground below and the dusting of white on their branches.

I especially think of them as protectors from the cold north wind that blows across the field toward our home. In fact, their thoughtful planting by a previous owner seemed to have had just that in mind. They stand straight and tall between 50 to 60 feet high and number 14 trees in all in alternating rows. They never flinch or fail against the high winds and stormy weather so prevalent here in Heath.

And yet there is a gentleness about them, the way their boughs sway and provide habitat to many. Often I can look out of our second floor window and see the finches and blue jays who stay for the winter, darting in and out of the branches where they've made a home or searching for seeds from the pine cones. The squirrels, of course, like them too. The light of the early morning gives them a warm hue of pink luminescence that lasts just briefly as the sun begins to rise.

But my favorite spruce tree on our land is the blue spruce that stands alone yet majestically on our south-facing front yard. It has an unusual double trunk and rises maybe 65 feet high. The cats love to watch the birds in this tree from the deck or windows, wanting to get closer still. There is a child's royal blue hula hoop stuck in the branches just about 15 feet up which has already been there a couple of years. I hope it stays there for a long time, enveloped by the trees, marking our homestead as the "Old Phillips Place" someday, the place where we raised our family and became part of a community.



### **Town Business**

The Selectboard meets every Tuesday night at 7:00 p.m. in Sawyer Hall.

#### **Open House for our new State Representative**

On Friday, January 20, Tom and Sue Lively hosted an open house for town officials to meet our new state representative, Dan Bosley of North Adams. Dan will become our next representative as a result of the latest redistricting plan. Our current representative John Merrigan also attended the meeting to introduce Dan and to help him understand the issues that he has been working on for the Town of Heath. Dan has served in the State House for 18 years and is a well-respected, influential member of the legislature. He will be a great asset to Heath. We appreciate the good work that John Merrigan has done for our town and wish him well in his future endeavors.



#### **Community Hall and Sawyer Hall**

No word has been received on the status of our CDBG grant application for the repairs and accessibility improvements to the Community Hall and Sawyer Hall. Officials from the state have informed us that we will know not later than the middle of February. Apparently the delay in processing the grant is due to an extra round of applications being included last year.

#### **New Postmistress**

Marcella Lively has tendered her resignation as Postmistress after 20 years of service. We shall miss her presence in the post office especially on Saturday mornings. Margo Newton has been serving as temporary postmistress since Marcella's resignation and has recently been hired to the permanent position. There is a need for a substitute postmaster/mistress. Anyone interested in serving in this capacity should contact Becky Jurek at the Town Offices.

#### **New Dog Officer**

David Cote has graciously consented to be the new dog officer for the Town. We will do our best to support him in that role to make the job as tolerable as possible.

#### **Three-Town Landfill**

The Initial Site Assessment phase of the landfill closing has been completed and the final report has been submitted. A representative from Almer Huntley Associates, the engineers who were commissioned to do the study, met with the Selectboards from the three towns to review the findings. Further action is pending awaiting a response from the Department of Environmental Protection. Discussion of the distribution of costs among the three towns is ongoing.

#### **Pothole Money**

We have received word from our state representatives that there will be no money in the budget this year for the Foundation Reserve Fund or "pothole money," as it is commonly called. This is a serious blow to the Town's financial situation. The Selectboard and Finance Committee will be working on the budget in the next few weeks to

determine the impact of this issue on the tax rate and on possible cuts and cost savings in the current budget.

#### **Heath On-Line**

Take some time to visit the Town's home page [www.townofheath.org](http://www.townofheath.org). You'll find Selectboard meeting minutes, school information, and much more. The home page is a work in progress. Thanks to the computer committee for getting this project up and running. Contact the Board at [BOS@townofheath.org](mailto:BOS@townofheath.org). Send messages to any board or individual via the E-mail address, or visit the Heath home page.

*~ Heath Selectboard  
Thomas Lively, Chair  
Brian DeVriese  
Hilma Sumner*

### **From the Desk of the Town Coordinator**

I cannot say I've been initiated into the 'Heath Winter Club' as old man winter hasn't been playing a key role this season. For the love of snow (and snowmobiling!), I haven't missed the road conditions that go along with all the fun part of a true New England winter.

That being said, I would like to take a few minutes of your time to introduce myself. For those of you whom I haven't had the pleasure of meeting, I'm your new Town Coordinator, located in the heart of Heath at Sawyer Hall. I'm a native of Colrain, where I reside with my husband and 11-year-old daughter, along with three Alaskan Malamutes and two calico cats. I am also serving as the Assistant Town Accountant.

I have been getting to know the folks of this beautiful countryside since September, and I must say I couldn't be working with and for a more professional group of people. I think what is unique about the Heath atmosphere is that staff involved with running the town are looking at and working towards issues together. The town is very fortunate to have employees, board and committee members, who know their business and offer their expertise.

I am very much a firm believer in soliciting input from every individual in town. That concern or idea for improvement you may have can't prove helpful if you are silent. Do not hesitate to get involved. I would like to encourage your participation in town business. The position I am in is designated to coordinate town affairs, and I would enjoy hearing from you. Rest assured, with one aspect of this position, I will strive to utilize resources and to secure funding so that Heath will reap the benefits. I will be working closely with the Selectboard and Finance Committee to help reduce the upcoming budget, and just as important, increase it where necessary. I have found, in every sense of the word, that Heath truly is a paradise, and feel very privileged to be a part of your community.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me Mondays through Thursdays (337-4934) or E-mail me at [bos@townofheath.org](mailto:bos@townofheath.org). In the meantime, hope you and your family enjoyed the early springtime weather. Take care.

*~ Rebecca Jurek*

**PLEASE BE AWARE OF THE MAR. 10TH DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS.**

Mail to: P.O. Box 54, Heath, MA 01346 or drop materials off in box at the Town Hall entryway.



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## **The State of Heath's Finances**

In today's society there is a socioeconomic relationship between state governments and local subdivisions of cities and towns. This report focuses on this dependency arrangement in Massachusetts and on the positives and negatives of Heath's financial situation.

Heath is a wonderful little town in which to live and raise a family. With a population of 805 and an area of 25 square miles we have a density of one person per 20 acres. We have beautiful views, restricted development areas, bountiful forests and hiking, skiing and snowmobile trails, decent roads, a great snow removal team, and people that volunteer in support of the Town and of many other local organizations. We wave to each other on the road and agree to disagree in agreeable fashion on local issues. We have a well regarded school system for the kids, something that is very important to the younger families. In short, we believe Heath is a very comfortable place to live.

What is not so comfortable is Heath's year-to-year financial crisis caused primarily by unpredictable assessments for education costs, imposition of regulations, and a population growth accompanied by an inadequate tax base. This has been the pattern for over a decade. The Department of Education (DOE) has helped Heath for the past six years with Foundation Reserve funds (aka Pothole money) of up to \$150,000 per year, but for FY02 the State is incurring serious shortfalls and so far has not funded that account. We may well have a tax rate near \$25 per \$1,000 valuation, an increase of over 25% from FY01's rate of \$19.65. We have become inextricably involved with and unavoidably dependent on the State to help us meet the obligations placed upon us by state law.

Let us look at some major FY02 budget items for Heath to get a sense of our situation:

### **EDUCATION**

- Capital - Heath's education expenses total \$968,989 or 57% of its total budget. Of that amount, \$310,044 or 32% is for the capital costs of its Elementary School. The State pays Heath \$197,018 to offset that commitment making our local cost \$113,026. Since 1997, when we started paying for the School, we have appropriated about \$80,000 per year and were able to pay the difference of our share from reserves we had established. Those reserves are nearly gone now. The Town was FORCED to build a school that is becoming beyond its means to support. This is due in part to the ever increasing amount of Chapter 70 Aid that is awarded by the State, which in turn requires an ever increasing local contribution. For example, in 1996 the total Mohawk Trail Regional School District (MTRSD) budget was \$12,638,176 of which \$10,707,504 was for operating costs; in 2002, five years later, the comparable numbers are \$17,443,814 and \$13,502,871. The percent change is 38% and 26.1% respectively. The increase in the total budget is relatively higher primarily due to new high/middle school construction. Heath's share of that new construction cost is \$33,131 this year. In fairness to MTRSD, the total operating assessments over the five-year period have been in the 2.5% annual range achieved in part via increases in a range of offset factors in the budget that can vary year to year.
- Operating - Our assessment from the Mohawk Trail Regional School District (MTRSD) is \$558,865 for FY02 versus \$483,259 for FY01, an increase of 15.6%. The same numbers for the Franklin Tech School are \$63,707 and \$32,887, an increase of 48.4%. Together these two budget items represent an increase of 20.6%. While the Tech School increase is partly due to more kids attending the school, the results are primarily due to the anomalies and arbitrary rules of the Education Reform program that caused the Town to lose in FY02 some \$116,000 in Excess Debt Credit. There have been many positive results of Education Reform, but rural regional school districts continue to have problems. Our busing routes are too long, economies of scale in management are not possible as with Greenfield, for example. Each town is unique but the district concept treats towns as if we were all the same. When adverse economic conditions arise in the State, such as for this year, the impact on local government and schools is shifted to the towns. Heath's only reserve, however, is its Stabilization Fund, which is being used and held for badly needed capital expenditures. For the record, Heath's actual out-of-pocket cost for education, i.e. capital and operating expenses, is 62.7% of its local tax levy - \$771,971, of a levy guesstimated to be \$1,230,600 for a very high \$15.44 school tax rate based on the Town's actual property valuation. If the State's Ed Reform valuation for Heath is used then the rate is \$21.80!
- School Population - In making our argument to the DOE for Pothole Money, we submitted data that show Heath's student population is 28.8% higher for its population of 805 citizens than the other towns in the MTRSD, a ratio that turns out to be similarly above that of all towns and cities in Massachusetts. This means we have 50 more students per capita than the average community, a fact that translates into an additional cost of about \$170,400 for FY02 or \$3.40 in the tax

("The State of Heath's Finances" continued on page 9)



rate based on operating costs. While the foregoing is true it should be noted that Heath’s elementary school population has been declining. The impact of this trend on school assessments has been lessened by the five-year averaging provision of the District’s Regional Agreement.

- Proposition 2½ - In 1982, Proposition 2½ legislation provided cities and towns with control over yearly increases of local tax appropriations of more than 2½%. It was the result of a taxpayers revolt against State mandated measures and autonomous school districts. At last, the Home Rule provision of the State Constitution gave communities some real teeth with which to control their finances. Heath was able to do that for a decade. However, the advent of Education Reform in 1993, which was in response to a court case, changed that by establishing a formula that essentially dictated school assessment calculations. Then, in 1996, the MTRSD was formed and Proposition 2½ became almost totally irrelevant because a majority vote of the towns could approve a budget no matter what the impact might be on any one individual community. Thus, this aspect of Home Rule became largely ineffective; we have voted away what little control we had with regard to overburdening education cost obligations.

### **HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

Heath’s Highway Department has four full-time employees, one part-time employee for the Transfer Station, and a temporary summer employee. The Town has 52 miles of roads to maintain, half of which are dirt. It is the second largest budget item after schools.

- Budget - The Department’s budget is \$321,057, which includes \$34,477 for loan payments on vehicles. This is 26.1% of the Town’s estimated levy for FY02. The Town does receive some Chapter 81 Highway money via the Cherry Sheets that goes into general receipts, but the State cut funding of that account this year by 75% from \$37,310 to \$9,327.
- Chapter 90 Funds - This money is appropriated by the Legislature to reimburse communities for road maintenance work. The Highway Superintendent submits a proposal to the Selectboard and, following their approval, the proposal is submitted to the State’s District Highway Department for their approval. The Town is then reimbursed upon completion of the job. Governor Cellucci reduced allocations of these funds by 50% a couple of years ago, but then Acting Governor Jane Swift pledged to restore them over a two-year period starting this year. This funding is absolutely vital to maintaining our local roads.
- Flood Damage - Heath incurred severe flood damage in June 2000. It put an additional workload on the Highway Department, which did very well in coping with the situation. Total expenditures were \$240,695. Emergency funding from the State was requested via Representative Merrigan and Senator Nuciforo, and, to date, we have received \$180,000. Further efforts are being made to obtain the balance.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

There is a wide range of programs designed to improve and protect our environment. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) administers most of these programs and cooperates with the Federal Environmental Protection Agency in certain areas as appropriate. Locally, we see its greatest impact with Title V septic system requirements and trash removal. Title V requires additional technical administration with substantial increases in cost incurred by the homeowner. With regard to the latter, the Town created its Transfer Station in 1988 and closed the dump on Burrington Hill, which was operated jointly with Charlemont and Hawley. The temporary dump closure was done in accordance with regulations, but permanent closure was prohibitively expensive. It was an example of State mandated actions; the three towns did what was required but no more and the State did not push enforcement further until this past year. Estimated costs run as high as \$800,000 to \$1,000,000 to close the area permanently. Heath’s share based on past practice would be 20% of the cost of the project, but Charlemont has been trying to negotiate a different payment schedule. So far there has not been a viable State financial program to help small towns in this situation.

### **ASSESSORS**

Assessing is a very important function and is one that is not subsidized by the State. However, there are legal requirements to be followed and, in my opinion, Massachusetts has one of the best programs in the country because of its across-the-board fairness to taxpayers. Properties have to be reviewed every three years and are to reflect 100% valuation. The total valuation becomes the basis for setting our tax rate via a simple arithmetical calculation - amount to be raised (levy) divided by the valuation per thousand. The actual process of determining values is complicated and requires a lot of work by our very part-time and competent assessors. The State also uses the valuation system to calculate aid to communities, so assessing serves a very important function in communities and the State.

- The assessors just completed their three-year reevaluation, which will affect this year's tax rate. Total valuation rose from about \$46,700 million to \$50,001 million, a 7% increase. This has the effect of lowering the tax rate but not the amount of money paid out by the taxpayer. Further, the Town's valuation in 1992 was \$50,700 million and then suffered a drop to the \$44,000 million range for several years after the closing of the Yankee Atomic Electric Company in Rowe. In recent years values have risen but essentially what this means is that taxpayers have been paying out more dollars to meet ever rising tax levies because the tax base has not been improved upon.
- This brings us to the nub of the Town's financial problems. The Town is zoned 99.4% residential/agricultural and .06% commercial. There is no industrial or large/unique capital tax base. One \$150,000 house brings in maximum of \$3,000 in taxes based on a \$20 rate. The cost of educating one child is about \$3,400 based on operating expenses and about \$4,400 when you include capital expenses. It is obvious that private housing property values cannot support the educational and other service needs of the Town all by themselves with the kind of numbers we have - 175 children in school out of a population of 805.
- We need some creative thinking here regarding developing local resources without adversely affecting the rural ambiance of the Town. The DOE has bailed us out for several years but that source may be drying up. We have asked (1) the State to address our chronic high student population problem and (2) the MTRSD to consider other methods of calculating assessments, but these are complicated matters in a political environment. Not easy to fix.

#### **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Our staffing for public health and safety is minimal. Police coverage is part-time, the Fire Department has a part-time chief and volunteer firemen, and we have a part-time nurse. There is cooperation among the towns for police and fire coverage, which seems to work well, but our facilities for the police and fire operations are inadequate. There is a long-range plan to correct this situation and land has been purchased on which a building might be constructed some day. However, there is little public money out there for this undertaking. Some towns raise it locally outside the tax base. Our personnel do a great job with what they have. Being a small town makes it difficult to do more, but this is the way it is and we have to cope with it

#### **GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The State has a range of grant programs whereby communities can access funds for certain projects. The Town has taken advantage of them where possible.

- As everyone knows, the Community Hall has been declared unsafe. A recent Town Meeting approved applying for a State grant of \$205,477 for the Community Hall. The Town has to contribute \$57,275, which it can do with a transfer from its Stabilization Fund. Also approved was a request for \$257,459 to install an elevator and handicapped accessibility components to the Town Hall. No local contribution is required there.
- The Heath Local Historic District Committee with the support of the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Heath Historical Commission recently completed a study relative to creating a Historic Town Center. The Committee has representation from the Planning Board, Heath Historical Society, Heath Historical Commission, and Town Building Committee. It will be recommending a Historic District within the presently zoned Heath Center District for the purpose of preserving the historic integrity of the center of Town. Included would be the Community Hall, Sawyer Hall, the Heath Union Church, the Old Town House, and Center School and a few private properties. Approval of the proposal would provide additional access to grant funds to preserve Heath Center and its historic buildings.

In summary, Heath has a number of critical financial problems. Whether we like it or not, we are tied to the state bureaucracy. That is the way it is, so, for now anyway, we are forced to continue applying for State aid and grant monies to meet our needs and avoid unreasonable, perhaps impossibly high tax rates that would impact adversely on those with limited incomes. At the same time, there is a need for (1) a return of a viable Proposition 2 ½ program (2) more predictable school assessments with some adjustment for Heath's chronically high student enrollment (3) a streamlining of the State's interaction with communities to avoid delays and unnecessary politicking, and (4) a viable solution to Heath's tax base problems. Your thoughts and suggestions are most welcome. Members of the Finance Committee are David Cote, Dave Howland, Todd Sumner, and Ned Wolf. We still have a vacancy if anyone is interested.

~ D.F. Howland

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## Proposed Heath Local Historic District

The informational meeting to discuss the proposed Heath Historic District, held at the Heath Elementary School, Saturday, February 9, ended with no clear public mandate to proceed. Many questions, raised primarily by the residents in the proposed district, remain to be addressed and the bylaw amended before it can be voted on at a town meeting. Some eighteen months ago, the Selectboard appointed a Study Committee to look into the possibility of establishing a local historic district based on the expression of the Heath Visioning Study of 1999, "Heath Center makes a strong visible statement about the Community's values and heritage."

The work of the Committee, with the help of members of the Heath Historical Commission, included research into the history of the Center's buildings and compilation of descriptive reports, and talks were held with the property owners to inform them what this designation would mean to them and to gain their support. In addition to the five homeowners, these include three organizations, the Town of Heath, the Heath Historical Society, and the Union Church.

Following this work, the Committee voted to apply to the State for local historic district designation and, to that end, prepared and submitted the application which has won State approval. A copy of the materials including a proposed bylaw is available to the public in the Heath Public Library as well as in the town office. In addition to preserving the historic integrity of Heath Center, such a designation would enable the Sawyer and Community Halls, the Heath Historical Society's buildings, and the Union Church to apply for preservation or restoration assistance from the State when funds become available.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission has stated that ours "is an exceptionally well preserved New England town common with civic and residential buildings from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in compatible wood frame styles."

According to the Commission, Local Historic Districts can provide a community with "a continuing sense of its past, can limit the destruction of historical and architectural legacies of our ancestors, and provide assurance that they may be enjoyed by future generations. To its residents, it affords a means of neighborhood conservation, contributes to the stabilization and revitalization of an area, and provides a way for the community to exercise control over its future." Further, they "offer the strongest form of protection for the preservation of historic properties."

If we create a Heath Local Historic District, we will be joining the more than one hundred Massachusetts communities determined to preserve the great historic legacy of the Commonwealth.

Any questions can be addressed to the Committee chairman, Bob Viarengo.

*~ Jane deLeeuw*

### **Proposed Heath Local Historic District** **Answers to a Few Questions**

**How is a Local Historic District created?** - By the citizens of Heath, voting in a bylaw at Town Meeting by a 2/3 majority.

**Does creation of a Historic District affect taxes?** - No

**Does the bylaw restrict my ability to paint my house any color I want?** - No

**What kinds of things are reviewed by a Historic District Commission?** - Exterior architectural features visible from a public way.

**Who are the members of the Historic District Commission?** - Heath townspeople appointed by the Selectboard.

**Why do we need a Historic District?**

- It enables public and nonprofit buildings to be eligible for State funding.
- It protects us against State and Federal projects that could negatively impact our town center.
- It insures that new property owners will also maintain our historic character.

## **Frostbite Facts**

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By Joanne Fortune, RN

*From the Feb/March 2001 issue.*

This time of year the sun is closer to the Earth than during the summer. We need to be careful to use sunscreen SPF of at least 15 when we're outside for any amount of time chopping wood, walking, skiing, snowshoeing, sugaring, or just enjoying the crisp, cold winter. The snow reflects the sun's rays so we get a double whammy from it. Apply the sunscreen 15 minutes before exposure and every two hours or as directed. Remember to drink lots of water to prevent dehydration.

On another note, I'll give you some facts about frostbite to tuck away for colder weather. Frostbite is divided into three degrees (like burns). First degree (frostnip) is a numbness and whitening of the skin with no blistering if it is rewarmed properly. Second degree is superficial frostbite. The outer skin feels hard and frozen but the tissue beneath has normal resilience. It will probably blister. Third degree is deep frostbite. The skin is white or blotchy and blue, feels stiff, cold, and numb. The tissue underneath is hard and very cold. A health professional must be called, and antibiotics are needed to prevent infection and permanent damage.

To prevent frostbite, stay dry and out of the wind in extremely cold weather. Cover exposed skin, wear layers including a windproof outer layer, wool socks, and waterproof boots. Wear a hat and mittens (not gloves). Keep extra clothing and blankets in your car in case of car trouble. Don't drink alcohol or smoke. When you're out in the extreme cold, to treat frostbite, protect the frozen part from further exposure. Don't rewarm the area if refreezing is possible; wait until you're in a warm place.

Warm small areas with your breath or by tucking your hands or feet next to bare skin. Don't rub or massage the frozen area or it will further damage the tissues. If your feet are frostbitten, avoid walking if at all possible. Keep the area warm and elevated. Wrap with blankets to prevent bruising in case it gets bumped. If warm water is available, immerse it in 104-108 degree water (not hot!) for 15-30 minutes. Blisters may appear as the skin warms. Do not break them; infection may occur.

Call for medical help if there is:

1. Increased pain.
2. Swelling or redness.
3. Heat or red streaks coming from the area.
4. Pus discharged from the area.
5. A fever of 100 or higher with no other cause.



Hope you all have a very happy spring. I see people in their homes. If you would like an appointment, please call me at 337-5716. Thank you.

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## **Library Lines**

### **Thank You**



We have a new staff person at the library. Don Purington of Colrain started work in early November as the Library Assistant. Don is making great progress with his training and is learning his way around our library. He is married and has two children. If you haven't met Don yet, please stop in during our Monday or Saturday hours and say hello.

Our story hours are continuing on every other Friday morning at 10 a.m. through the end of April. Watch the *West County News* or check out the posters at the library for the exact dates. These story hours are funded through a grant from the Franklin County Family Network.

Since the New Year is off to a fast start already, I would like to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to all the generous people who have donated new and used materials and financial support to our library. It is a tremendous help to receive donations to help us stretch our limited library materials budget in these difficult economic times. When donations of materials are made they are evaluated to determine if they fit in our collection. If they do not, they are turned over to the Friends of the Library for their annual book sale at the Heath Fair unless the donor requests that they be returned. If you have materials you would like to donate but are unable to bring them in yourself, please call me at 337-4934 during library hours and we will arrange to pick them up.

(“Library Lines” continued on page 16)

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Nancy L. Dole

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Blueberries & Applesauce  
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**Fred Burrington**  
Artist  
337-4302

**Cable's Burnt Hill  
Blueberries**  
337-4210

**Coursey Design**  
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**L & S Enterprises**  
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**Patricia Lentz**  
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## Milestones

Born December 4, 2001, a son, **Oscar McGee**, to Amy E. Croteau and Christian R. Traceski of Heath; grandson of Sue B. Croteau of Heath, Edmond J. Croteau of Vermont, and Linda and Edwin Traceski of Greenfield; great-grandson of Nancy and Paul Burrington of Heath and Ellis Sturtevant of Greenfield.

~ Edith Royer

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## Clark A. Johnson

Clark A. Johnson of Heath died February 3, 2002, at home. He was born in Deadwood, SD, January 15, 1947, the son of Arnold G. and E. Lucille Blow Johnson. He was a graduate of Rapid City (SD) High School and of South Dakota State University, receiving a bachelor's degree in science writing in 1975.

A resident of western Massachusetts for 30 years, he was until recently the managing editor of the West County News in Shelburne Falls which he joined in 1997. Previously, he was employed for eight years as a news correspondent and columnist for the Greenfield Recorder and for one year as a news writer at the Springfield Union News.

An avid astronomer and nature lover, he was a member of the Amherst Amateur Astronomers Association and the Arunah Hill Natural Science Center. He wrote the astronomy column for the West County News and was famous in Heath for his "Star Parties" during which he shared his knowledge and enthusiasm with many residents. He was also active in town government.

He is survived by his wife of 27 years, the former Cynthia Burnham; his son, Dylan C.R., at home; his daughter, Lyra M. Johnson-Bouchard of Charlemont, and a granddaughter.

A memorial service will be held February 17 at 2:30 p.m. at the Charlemont Federated Church with the Rev. Allen Comstock, pastor, officiating.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made Avatar Meher Baba Trust, Inc. in care of Greenfield Savings Bank, 58 Bridge Street, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370.

### Friends of the Heath Elementary School Library

A meeting will be held at the Heath Elementary School on Monday, March 4, at 9 a.m. to form a new organization, The Friends of the Heath Elementary School Library, the sole purpose of which will be to raise funds for the library.

Heath Elementary School has a beautiful facility with a wonderful librarian. The library needs our help to update the collection and keep it current in these days of budgetary constraints.

**PLEASE COME!**

## Heath Deed Transfers

Pauline B. Allaire of Springfield, to Brian Desautels of Turners Falls, 6 Waterfall Drive. \$79,000.

Ellen C. Francoeur of Granby, to Edward C. Francoeur of Chicopee, Mary A. LeBlanc of Hadley, Douglas C. Francoeur of Granby, Emily R. Francoeur of Granby, and Theresa M. Dearborn of Charlemont, Mohawk Estates, Lots 2 and 3. Less than \$100.

Uno and Theresa Guarna of Springfield, to Elaine B. Jerin of Chicopee, Mohawk Estates, Lot 26. \$3,000.

Russell M. and Linda L. Hamilton, by Bank of Western Massachusetts, to Chittenden Trust Company of Burlington, VT, Sadoga Road, Lot 9. \$128,400.

Leila Pauleen of Syosset, NY, to Brian D. and Lynne S. Pauleen of Portland, OR, Route 8A, 54 acres. \$1.

Diane A. Rogers of Northfield, to Jeffrey J. Murdock of North Adams, 21 West Branch Road. \$107,500.

Denis L. Roy of Chicopee to Daniel A. and Maria M. Roy of Chicopee, Mohawk Estates, Lot 10. \$1.

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("Marcella Lively" continued from page 3)

phone, but I finally called to her and told her to come on in. Next thing I knew she had gone outside and was trying to come in the window. I don't know what she thought she was doing. I finally got her to come through the door. That was a very strange day."

For the moment Marcella says she isn't doing too much. "While I was working I got undomesticated, and I now have to get back into that." She doesn't have much to do with the farm work, but she said last June she and Paul went to the auction down in Northampton and bought a new bull. "We just had a wonderful day together. That bull is a whiteface, and Paul really wanted him. In the spring we'll get his first calves." Paul became very ill in July, and passed away not long after.

Though Paul is gone, and nothing is the same, Marcella said that the children keep her going. She is starting to bake more, bread, cakes, and cookies. In the spring she will again start some tomato seedlings, the old favorites, Big Boys and Beefsteaks, maybe Early Girl.

"The town was good to me. They paid me well and it was very good to have insurance. I enjoyed it all, and I think Margo will have a ball!"

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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."*

### **Dick & Jerry**

By Carroll Stowe

Again I must use the name of a good friend to provide the grist for a Herald column. Howard Thompson was the owner of this fine team of Belgian horses. Dick was a roan and Jerry was chestnut colored. This team's duties were to gather sap, spread manure, and haul firewood and some logs.

This story deals with Howard's ongoing wish to be a helpful neighbor. At the time of this story I was working for the Heath Highway Department. Having various commitments that didn't allow time to cut wood, my wife and I were going to be short of firewood to heat our house.

Howard offered standing dry wood from various points of his property. I was most pleased to cut wood at the Thompson farm and in so doing would cut for Howard too. We had good times together doing these tasks. I would go to Thompson's from work and work until dark and go home. One afternoon we were able to get a good sled load cut and loaded on the sled to go out of the cutting area. I asked Howard if I could take the load home with the team to save much handling. That was fine with him. These horses were shod sharp in front and barefoot behind, a good choice for a team in deep snow. Not being shod behind keeps a horse from cutting his front feet by over-reaching striking the forefoot with front part of hind foot.

This team was to do a job for me that they'd never done before, to travel down to 8A from Branch Hill and the Ben Road. Along the Ben Road flat the road edge was very slippery so their footing was somewhat precarious. They traveled at about 45 degrees to the center of the road. Not a fun experience. As I hadn't been on 8A since going to work I didn't realize that the sledding could be less than ideal. But all went well until we came to that bit of an incline in front of Ken Stetson's. The road was bare of any good sledding for perhaps a hundred feet. That good team realized they had no rear traction and just stopped. What a situation. The team stuck in the middle of the road and darkness approaching. What to do? Ken had a small Jeep pickup to clean his yard and it was there in the yard ready to plow snow. Reluctantly I left the team to see if Ken would just give the horses a bit of a bump which he did. Just at the moment Dick and Jerry felt a little pressure on the sled, they took ahold and on we went. Ken says he'd forgotten all about that easily solved problem.

That situation would never have happened had I realized that the winter sun's noonday warmth had bared off that short stretch of tar road. Had I paid attention, it would have been simple to just step that team up a bit faster for the few feet of bare surface and the sled would have gone right along. From there on all went well.

The wood was unloaded into the cellar with just one handling, and the trip back to Howard's was uneventful. Howard was some pleased that the solution was so easily come to. These horses and their master are long passed and their like will never be matched again in this lifetime.

I've been driving teams at various tasks since the age of four years old. Not, to be sure, did I do a man's work with a team at that tender age but that's when I began to develop a feel for a good honest team. I have had some great times and some sadness as these faithful helpmates passed into memories.

Please, as this is read in the Herald, try to understand the good, honest animals people pull back out of the distant past. These stalwart friends were from the simpler time these treasured thoughts come from.

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("Library Lines" continued from page 12)

We have purchased most of the books that were winners and finalists in the first annual Massachusetts Book Awards which were announced in early November. A list of the books and some of the books are displayed on top of the card catalogue in the library. These books were purchased with funds from the Catherine Heyl Memorial Fund.

Among the new videos at the library are *American Beauty*, *O Brother Where Art Thou?*, *Needful Things*, and *The Newton Boys*. The new adult fiction books are *Falling Angels* by Tracy Chevalier, *What You Owe Me* by Bebe Moore Campbell, *Fury* by Salman Rushdie, and *On Green Dolphin Street* by Sebastian Faulks. The new adult nonfiction book is *Fire* by Sebastian Junger.

~ Charleen Churchill

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## **The Circuit Breaker**

**By Senator Andrea F. Nuciforo, Jr.**

As tax season approaches, senior citizens should remember the property tax credit called "The Circuit Breaker." This credit is called the Circuit Breaker Tax Credit because it is "triggered," like an electrical circuit breaker, when property tax payments exceed 10 percent of a senior citizen's annual income. The credit cannot exceed \$750, and is available to single and joint filers aged 65 and older.

Working with Senate President Tom Birmingham, I supported this tax break because there are thousands of senior citizens across the Commonwealth who currently find themselves in homes that have greatly appreciated in value since they were first purchased. At the same time, many of these seniors are now on fixed incomes as they enjoy their retirement. As a result, these senior citizens are paying property taxes that represent an unreasonably high percentage of their income.

The provisions of Proposition 2 ½ have created a difficult dynamic for many seniors. Often, these seniors find themselves pitted against proponents to fund schools, not because they are opposed to the idea of spending more money for education, but because they simply cannot afford the additional taxes. The Circuit Breaker Tax Credit is designed to provide some relief from this dynamic.

The credit is limited to taxpayers who are 65 years of age or older with incomes of \$41,000 or less for single filers, \$51,000 or less for head of household filers, and \$61,000 or less for joint filers. Also, the assessed valuation of the homeowner's personal residence cannot exceed \$412,000.

Those who qualify for the break will still be required to pay property taxes to their local communities. However, certain taxpayers may be eligible to claim a refundable credit on his or her state income taxes for the real estate taxes paid during the tax year on the residential property they own or rent in Massachusetts that is used as their principal residence. The maxi-

mum credit allowed is \$385 for the tax year beginning January 1, 2001, and \$750 for tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2002. If the credit due the taxpayer exceeds the amount of the total income tax payable for the year by the taxpayer, the excess amount of the credit will be refunded to the taxpayer without interest.

Eligible taxpayers who own their property may receive a dollar credit for every dollar of their property tax that exceeds 10 percent of their income, up to the \$385 maximum. Senior citizens who rent their homes can also take advantage of the same dollar for dollar credit, up to the same \$385 maximum, if 25 percent of their annual rent exceeds 10 percent of their annual income.

If you qualify for the Circuit Breaker Tax Credit there is no special application required. You can receive the tax credit by filling out a 2001 Massachusetts state income tax return before the April 2002 deadline. Official information packets for 2001 state income tax returns will include Circuit Breaker schedules and are available in local libraries and post offices.

This is a relatively new program, so there are bound to be questions. If you would like more information, and are interested in determining your eligibility, please don't hesitate to contact the Massachusetts Department of Revenue Customer Service Bureau at 617-887-MDOR or toll-free at 800-392-6089, or visit their website, [www.mass.gov/dor](http://www.mass.gov/dor). As always, please feel free to contact my office with any questions or concerns you may have regarding state-related matters.

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## **Soups – Winter Comfort Food**

Jane deLeeuw



On cold winter days, coming in from a walk or from shoveling snow or from a busy day at school or at work, nothing tops a warming and nourishing bowl of soup.

In addition to old favorites such as vegetable beef and split pea with ham, I have found some of the lighter “vegetarian” soups fill the bill as well. (I use vegetable stock instead of chicken stock, oil instead of butter, and one-percent milk instead of whole milk or cream). I make a soup a week (mine usually last that long) and am always on the lookout for new recipes, especially ones using lots of vegetables of which we all - according to the experts - should be eating more. Here are three of my latest finds.

### **Roasted Butternut Squash Soup**

4 pounds butternut squash  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1 small onion  
2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced  
5 cups chicken or vegetable stock  
1 cup milk

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Using a large, heavy knife, split the squash in half. Scrape out the seeds and discard them. Place squash halves on a baking sheet, season to taste, and roast until very tender, about an hour. Scrape out flesh with spoon and set aside, discarding skin. In a large pot over moderate heat, melt butter, add onion and garlic, and cook, stirring frequently, until golden, six to seven minutes. Add stock and squash and cook uncovered for 25 minutes. Cool. Puree in batches in blender or food processor and return to pot. Stir in milk and reheat.



### **Cauliflower-Carrot Soup**

1 tablespoon each, butter and olive oil  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 large onion  
2 large carrots  
1 cauliflower, broken into pieces  
½ cup dry sherry (optional)  
3 1/2 cups chicken or vegetable stock  
¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped  
1 cup milk  
curry powder or ginger to taste (optional)

In a large soup pot, heat butter and oil. Add garlic and onion and sauté. Add carrots, cauliflower, and sherry. Add chicken or vegetable stock and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 30 minutes until vegetables are tender. Add parsley. Puree in blender and return to pot. Add milk, season to taste. Do not boil.

### **Vegetable Soup**

(low in calories, loaded with nutrients)

2 cups peeled diced potatoes  
5 cups water  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
1 large onion, chopped  
1 1/2 teaspoons caraway seeds  
1 teaspoon salt if desired or no-salt seasoning  
2 cups sliced or grated carrots  
1/2 cup diced celery with tops  
1 parsnip, peeled and chopped or grated  
3 cups chopped cabbage  
1 large beet, cooked, save water  
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1/2 teaspoon dill weed or 1 tablespoon fresh dill  
1 cup tomato puree

In a medium saucepan, cook potatoes in water until tender. Drain and save the water. In a large saucepan or Dutch oven, heat the oil and sauté onion until translucent. Add caraway seeds, salt, carrots, celery, parsnip, cabbage, and potato water. Bring soup to boil, reduce heat, cover, and cook the vegetables until they are tender. Add potatoes, beets and beet water, pepper, dill, and tomato puree. Cook and simmer for another 30 minutes.

### **Heath Visitors**

A luncheon reception was held at the Town Hall on February 11 to welcome Sue and Michael Kerton, natives of Heath, Derbyshire, England. The Kertons were presented with a certificate of honorary citizenship, books on Heath’s history, and notecards depicting Heath scenes. In turn, the Kertons gave the town a sketch of their hometown along with informative booklets and issued a general invitation to all Heath residents to visit them in England.

*Pictured in the photograph from left to right are: Tom Lively, Sue and Mike Kerton, and Hilma Sumner.*

## **Founding Mothers of Heath**

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By Amy C. Barry

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History, even in a little town like Heath, too frequently appears to be the story of men. The mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters are lost in the shadows and are more likely to emerge as a name on a marriage certificate or a gravestone, rather than as an individual personality. As a result, however, of the recent interest in the history of women, considerable information about women in 18th century New England has come to light. With this information as background, we can draw on the writings of Anna and Priscilla Maxwell and the modern history of Dr. Edward Calver to gain a clearer picture of what life was like for the founding mothers of Heath.

In 18th century New England the home was the center of production for all the necessities of life. It was in the home that raw materials were transformed into finished products, be the(y) raw material corn to be ground and baked into bread, or wool to be carded, spun, and woven into cloth for blankets and clothes. Most everything used in the home was made there, especially in a rural settlement like Heath. Women made their own soap, brooms, candles, and starch. Cooking was also a major undertaking, for it was done on an open hearth and had to be constantly tended.

When women were not stirring stews or spinning thread, they were having babies. Large families were common in Heath in the 18th century, as they were throughout the Colonies. Hugh and Bridget Maxwell had seven children and Hugh's brother Benjamin has eleven children. James White and his wife Ruth (Ballard), early settlers of South Heath, had ten children. Jonathan Leavitt and his wife Sarah (Hooker) had twelve children.

There were important economic reasons for having large families. Religious attitudes also promoted the idea of the "fruitful" woman. However, giving birth to so many children at such frequent intervals was exhausting and many times fatal for mothers. We must also bear in mind the state of medicine in the 18th century. Sarah Leavitt, for example, died in 1791 when she was 48 years old. She left behind 12 children, the youngest of whom was only six years old. Mrs. Leavitt had given birth to a child on the average of one every two years for 24 years.

The weakened condition of the mother due to frequent pregnancies also had an effect on the health of the baby. The reality of high maternal and infant mortality rates among Heath settlers is vividly illustrated by the story of the three wives of Jacob Snow who settled in the Dell about 1810. Mr. Snow's first wife died in childbirth and her baby with her. His second wife died in childbirth, although the baby lived. His third wife bore him six children, of whom two only lived for a few days and

another (for) only five years.

Another aspect of life that directly affected women was the house in which they lived. The homes of most of the early inhabitants of Heath were far less grand than Leavitt's house or the Maxwell house on South Road. Hugh Maxwell's daughter Priscilla described her family's first house as consisting of one room and a closet, so poorly built that "often, in the winter's morning, they would find themselves covered with some inches with snow that drifted through chinks in the roof".

Jonathan Taylor, his wife, and four children lived in a one room log house not more than 18 feet in either direction. When the Taylors first settled near Colrain Brook Road, their nearest neighbors were over a mile away. That children were born and raised, families clothed and fed, and communities like Heath settled under conditions such as these, can be attributed to the courage, vision, and tenacity of foremothers as well as our forefathers.

Life in early Heath was demanding enough for women whose husbands were at home. What is incredible is that more than one woman was left alone with her children while her husband left home for weeks, months, or years at a time. Concerning the first woman, the wife of the Rev. John Norton, we have only scanty facts that must be filled in with conjecture. Her husband was the chaplain of Fort Shirley, during the French and Indian War and she, with their children, accompanied him there in 1746. (The) Rev. Norton was subsequently captured by Indians while on a visit to Fort Massachusetts. Mrs. Norton was left alone at Fort Shirley for over a year, living with 38 officers and enlisted men in a 60 foot square enclosure with rooms 11 feet wide. During her husband's absence, Mrs. Norton lost her daughter Anna. Imagine what life must have been like for this lady, worrying about the safety of her husband, grieving alone over the death of her child, and enduring the cramped, harsh conditions of fort life.

Bridget Maxwell was not the only woman who had to manage alone while her husband fought in the Revolution. She may, however, be unique in that her husband was away from home for nine years, with only a few brief furloughs. The many tasks of rural life undertaken by Mrs. Maxwell and her seven children were truly awesome. They had to care for the livestock, cut and haul firewood, and raise and harvest the crops. The hardships caused by Lt. Colonel Maxwell's absence were not always easy for Mrs. Maxwell to bear. This is demonstrated in Priscilla Maxwell's description of her father's departure after a short period at home. "It was against the remonstrance and tears of his wife," Miss Maxwell writes, "who could not bear the thought of being left again in such circumstances of privation and hardship". Hugh Maxwell served his country long and well during the Revolution. Bridget(t) Maxwell served her country equally well on the homefront.

For women in 18th century Heath there was hard work to do, many children to raise, and adversity to overcome. By learning more about their lives and by recognizing the very real contributions they made, we can take the founding mothers of Heath out of the shadows and make their story an important part of our town's heritage.

## Heath Emergency Services News

The following calls were answered recently:

10/13/01 - Avery Brook Rd. - Accident  
 10/14/01 - Number Nine Rd. - Medical  
 10/27/01 - Number Nine Rd. - Medical  
 11/10/01 - Number Nine Rd - Medical  
 11/22/01 - Sumner Stetson Rd - Medical  
 11/27/01 - Hosmer Rd. - Medical  
 12/03/01 - Sadoga Rd - Medical  
 12/13/01 - Navajo Lane - Medical  
 12/20/01 - Sumner Stetson Rd. - Medical  
 12/28/01 - Bray/Colrain Stage Rd. - Accident  
 12/29/01 - Shawnee Drive - Medical  
 12/31/01 - Flagg Hill Rd. - Medical

We responded to 39 EMT calls in 2001:

32 Medical  
 7 Accidents

We would like to thank the Charlemont, Shelburne Falls, and BHS ambulance services for their help with these calls.

The Department wishes everyone a peaceful NewYear.

~ Timothy Lively - EMT

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