



HEATH HERALD

Heath's First Newspaper

\$1.00

Volume 25, Number 5

December 2003/ January 2004

NATIVITY

CHRISTMAS SONG. 6. 6. 6. 6. 12. 12.

JOSIAH G. HOLLAND, 1872

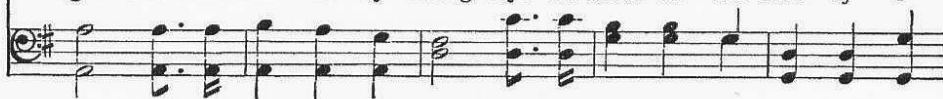
KARL P. HARRINGTON, 1904



1. There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky! There's a moth-er's deep
2. There's a tu-mult of joy O'er the won-der-ful birth, For the Vir-gin's sweet
3. In the light of that star Lie the a - ges im-pearled; And that song from a -
4. We re-joyce in the light, And we ech - o the song That comes down through the



prayer, And a ba - by's low cry! And the star rains its fire while the
Boy Is the Lord of the earth. Ay! the star rains its fire while the
far Has swept o - ver the world. Ev - ery hearth is a - flame, and the
night From the heav - en - ly throng. Ay! we shout to the love - ly e -



beau - ti - ful sing, For the man - ger of Beth - le - hem cra - dles a King!
beau - ti - ful sing, For the man - ger of Beth - le - hem cra - dles a King!
beau - ti - ful sing In the homes of the na - tions that Je - sus is King!
van - gel they bring, And we greet in His cra - dle our Sav - iour and King! A-MEN.



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In this issue.....

Josiah Gilbert Holland, Poet and Author	3
Wild Ramblings	5
Ireland Reminiscence	6
Heath Ladies Aid	8
Was It a Rat I Saw?	17
Phyllis Kades	18-19

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

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Letter To The Editor



Dear Editor,

As Heath's newest Selectperson I am frequently asked how the job is going or if I like being a Selectperson? The answer comes with difficulty as the job is so multifaceted. Naturally what comes first to mind are the things about the job that I don't like. But let me fight that urge and say a few nice things first.

It is great to work with Tom and Brian. They are thoughtful and experienced at balancing the myriad of issues that come our way. We don't always agree but we certainly can have a good dialog. Becky is a treasure and a joy to work with. And most important, Heath is blessed with a fantastic group of employees who creatively do their jobs to the best of their abilities given limited resources.

It has been wonderful to discover just how much volunteerism is going on about town. In fact these volunteer efforts may be the heartbeat of Heath. I see people taking time to find ways to do a job that another town would be able to pay for. I discover that a small carpentry job is somehow taken care of. I learn of people taking precious time to write grants with the purpose of saving the town hundreds of thousands of dollars. I'm not surprised at the extent of volunteerism in Heath, just delighted each and every time upon its discovery. It is a gift we give to each other and to our town, over and over again.

However, this brings me back to what I do not like about being a Selectperson. The part of the job I could do without occurs as the fallout when we treat each other badly. It was much easier before being elected to ignore any behind-the-scenes rumor stirrings. But as a Selectperson, this eventually must be faced, and dealt with. Assumptions, rumors, and untruths hurt us all and degrade our community. We are all in the same boat with regard to Heath taxes, and other challenges of rural living. The only realistic political agenda is to do our best to get Heath what she needs while keeping the tax rate as low as possible. We are all on the same page on that one.

The part of the job I don't like stirs a fear in me for what we stand to lose. Can you imagine Heath without volunteers? Yikes! To keep the heart beating in Heath, we must take care of each other. We are each responsible for what we do for the town, what we say, and how we treat each other. I respectfully ask that issues and concerns be brought to the Selectboard directly. I also ask that questions be respectfully directed to the persons responsible. I have faith that we can figure out together any difficult issue- as long as we hear each other well. And finally, I ask for your patience as I grow into this position.

Still learning how to listen,
Sheila M. Litchfield



Josiah Gilbert Holland, Poet and Author

Every Christmas season in the Heath church the congregation lifts their voices in song with one of Josiah Gilbert Holland's beautiful poems. It was written later in his life, 1872, after he had proven his worth as an American writer. In 1904 his poem was set to music by Karl P. Harrington and later published in *The New Church Hymnal* in 1937.

Down through the years the little hill town of Heath has touched the lives of many people from the four corners of the earth. One such individual was Josiah Gilbert Holland. Although residing most of his life in other locations, most of them in western Massachusetts, he spent part of his childhood living with his family in Heath. Many have not heard of Mr. Holland but his works were popular during his lifetime and into the twentieth century. One biographer, H.

H. Peckham, stated that "he grew to be the best-selling American author of edifying books in his generation."

Josiah was born in Belchertown on July 24, 1819, to Harrison and Anna Gilbert Holland. He was the seventh and youngest child born to these devoted Congregationalists. Harrison owned and ran a carding machine which served him well until the industrial age took over after 1820. The father then struggled to find a new livelihood to support his family. For the family, this meant several moves from town to town including Heath, South Hadley, Granby, and Northampton as the children were growing up.

While residing in Heath, Harrison worked as a wagon wheel maker. The family lived in what is now the red house by the pond in the Dell. Some folks still refer to that area of town as "Holland's Dell." Because of the instability of the father's livelihood, Josiah and the other children were raised in a home with very modest means.

When Josiah was sixteen the family was living in Granby. The teenager began an informal study of religion and theology which would later serve him well in his literary work. He would borrow books from the minister of their church, the Rev. Eli Moody, who remarked at one point, "that boy would make his mark in the world." If Josiah could have afforded a college education, undoubtedly he would have become a minister.

After finishing high school in Northampton, instead of college, Holland worked as a maker of quill pens and taught penmanship. His fame as a writing master spread across western Massachusetts and into southern New Hampshire. He taught classes as far away as Chesterfield and Hinsdale, NH.

While thus employed the young man decided to study medicine. Today's reader would question how he could engage in a study of medicine when Holland did not have the means to prepare for the ministry. In the early to mid-nineteenth century New Englanders held the notion that since the body is transitory and the soul immortal, the spiritual healer should be a far more learned man than the physical healer. The church minister held an infinitely graver responsibility than the medical doctor. Because of this view, Josiah had only to complete a two-year course of study for his M.D. Six months completed in formal study plus two years under the tutelage of an experienced general practitioner earned him a doctorate of medicine from Berkshire Medical College in Pittsfield in 1844.

After two years in a partnership, Dr. Holland realized he was not cut out for a medical profession. He and his new wife, the former Elizabeth Chapin, took a two-year position as superintendent and teacher at a school in Vicksburg, MS. The second year ended abruptly when they were called back to Springfield due to the failing health of his mother-in-law.

Upon their return Josiah secured the position of assistant editor of *The Republican*. At the time Springfield's newspaper was the only daily edition outside of Boston. It was here that Holland realized his true calling. Besides his newspaper work he began to write and publish poetry of various lengths and several novels. Holland went on to live a very prolific literary life. In the next *Heath Herald*, readers will learn about his writings in more detail, Mr. and Mrs. Holland's friendship with another famous Massachusetts author, and what he had to say about Heath.

As the reader reflects on the words of this Christmas poem, it is not hard to imagine that his years as a boy in Heath may have come to mind as he penned those lines. Where is the night so dark that a single star lights the whole sky? Where is the air so crisp and quiet that the slightest celebration from nature cannot be heard? Where but in Bethlehem and in our Heath?

~ Hilma Sumner

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Remembering What It Was Like

In the last issue of the *Heath Herald* our son, Fred, wrote about our family leaving Heath. It wasn't something we wanted to do or had planned, but something that seemed necessary. I felt really sad about it, but it got me to thinking about moving to Heath. I was only ten, and, although we were coming from a somewhat rural town in New Jersey, it was not as rural as Heath. As a kid, I was open to new things, so it was kind of exciting to me. With this large new house we were moving into came two barns, a chicken house and a sugarhouse, not to mention a red International truck, a team of horses and one cow, which we named Buttercup, and a barn cat (male) which wasn't home too much of the time. We brought two dogs and some ducks and chickens with us.

The old house needed a lot of work. For starters, more electric outlets, and some fresh paint would have helped. Upstairs there was one ceiling light at the top of the stairs and one in one of the bedrooms. I don't think upstairs had any outlets and very few on the first floor. Shortly after we moved a cousin of mine and his wife came and spent a week while he put in some outlets. The Hurds, from whom we brought the place, could not have had a refrigerator because when we came and looked at the house, Mrs. Carl Hurd had a small child, and I remember seeing her go to the cellar-way stairs and get an open pitcher of milk off the shelf. Now this was in the summer, and I was thinking that the milk could not be very cold.

Soon after moving my folks thought it would be a good idea to go to church, which they did one Sunday morning. It must have been an interesting morning as I'm sure that they were looked over by the church folks, and I know that my parents did some of their own looking. One comment that I remember Dad saying was the offering was taken by a sleepy-eyed gentleman, who some years later turned out to be my dear father-in-law, Ted Burrington. Looking back, first impressions can be amusing. We, as humans, have a tendency to judge from first impressions, but so often we are completely wrong. So many of the people we met became such dearly loved friends, and some became family members. They were dearly loved too.

Going from a school with a classroom for each grade to one with four grades in one room wasn't as hard as you might think. I guess kids have a way of adjusting. I remember the first time I went back to New Jersey to visit, people thought I had developed a New England accent and in New England it was said I had a New Jersey accent. Personally, I didn't think I had any accent. However, there were new words to learn, like I had no idea where a "mowing" was. The cows are in the mowing? Okay, please explain. In New Jersey I walked to school, so it was new to have a bus come. I didn't care much for having to sit in the back with the boys, but I was told in no uncertain terms that the two girls would ride up front all the time. That was just the way it was. My first year of school was at Branch school. Then the town decided to have grades seven and eight go to the Center school. I really enjoyed those two years.

One thing I really loved was going to the square dances. The first one I ever went to was when Doug and Nada Stet-

son offered to take me to one. Doug took mercy on the new kid and got me to do one square with him, and then I was lucky enough to have Rollo Kinsman (one of the older boys) feel sorry for me and I got to do another square. Then I was hooked. I went to every square dance I could get to.

Another thing that living out in the country did for me was I learned to drive at an early age. First, so I could pull the hay wagon with our jeep, then Dad would let me drive it around town as long as "I behaved myself" Where else could you get away with driving at age 14?

Living on a farm there was always something to do. We didn't need TV to keep us amused. I could go to the barn and spend time caring for the animals and I loved to just putter around cleaning up in the barn and milk room.

So even though during the first months I plotted with my best friend in New Jersey to run away and meet somewhere, (we had no idea where or what we would do after we got there), I had to admit that this wasn't a bad place to live. Heath has changed a whole lot in the last 56 years, but haven't we all. It's been a very good life and there is little that I would want to change, except perhaps to change Heath back in many ways to what it was like 56 years ago. That was the place our family fell in love with.

~ Nancy Burrington

Housing Rehabilitation Program

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is administering the FY 2003 Housing Rehab Program on behalf of the Town of Heath.

Income eligible applicants who qualify for a full-deferred payment loan will be able to borrow up to \$25,000. This is a 0% interest, deferred payment loan. The loan is secured by a lien placed on your property and the loan is due when you sell or transfer the property.

For example: If you borrow \$25,000 for home repairs, when you sell or transfer the property the amount due is \$25,000.

The goal of this program is to enable low-to-moderate-income homeowners to bring their homes into code compliance, and handicap accessibility, do needed repairs, and weatherize their homes.

Homeowners and any tenant families must have an annual gross income equal to or less than the following amounts:

# In Household	Gross Annual Income
1	\$33,750.
2	\$38,600.
3	\$43,400.
4	\$48,250.
5	\$52,100.
6	\$55,950.
7	\$59,800.
8	\$63,700.

Please call Charity Day at (413) 863-9781 if you are interested in the Town of Heath Housing Rehab Program.



Some Berry Nutty Thoughts

By Bill Lattrell

Plants and animals have evolved together for millions of years. Their complex relationship, despite years of concentrated study by academics and naturalists, is still not fully understood. It is common knowledge that all animals are dependent upon plants for food, either directly or indirectly. It is also common knowledge that many plants are dependent upon animals for spreading their seeds, allowing the plant to become geographically and genetically diverse.

In the northeast United States we have very complex botanical communities. The large number of different plants found within small regions is due in part to our four different seasons, the temperate climate that is varied enough to support the wide variety plant species, and a wide distribution of different soil types that derived from long-ago glacial activity.

Some of our most important forage sources for wildlife are found on mast-bearing plants. Mast is forage derived from berries, seeds, or nuts. Soft mast are fruit and berries. Hard mast are seeds and nuts. These important food sources provide important nutrition for wildlife. The wildlife do their part for the plants by distributing the seeds over a wide range.

In my travels throughout the fields, swamps, and forests of Heath I have often noted the wide variety of edible mast in our town. In uplands we have much hard mast. Red oaks, hickories, butternuts, beechnuts, pinecones, hemlock cones, hazelnuts, and the seeds of birch trees, sumac shrubs, maple trees, poplar, and ash trees are all excellent hard mast sources. Most hard mast ripens and falls from the trees and shrubs in the autumn when animals need large food crops in order to store fat for a long winter. Squirrels, turkey, black bear, white-tailed deer, voles, mice, and many other species of wildlife take advantage of this forage throughout the fall. Earlier in the year birds feed on hazelnuts along the edges of fields, and birch and maple seeds in the forest. The hazelnut is so highly prized by wildlife that it is difficult for us humans to pick these nuts as they are harvested by wildlife as soon as they are ripe.

Soft mast is more diverse and complex. Some of the soft mast sources in Heath include silky dogwood berries, gray dogwood berries, highbush blueberries, lowbush blueberries, northern arrowwood berries, nannyberries, wild raisins, fox grapes, river grapes, frost grapes, service berries, honeysuckle berries, raspberries, blackberries, dewberries, cranberries, highbush cranberries, winterberries, black cherries, pin cherries, wild apples, chokeberries, strawberries, barberries, multiflora rose hips, and many more. These soft mast ripen at different times of the year and provide forage from June to March. Some of the early fruit includes serviceberry and strawberry. Both of these are available in June. In the middle of the summer there is an entire smorgasbord of available fruit including blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, honeysuckle berries, and chokeberries. In the early fall birds and mammals might satisfy their palate by eating black cherries, pin cherries, apples, arrowwood berries, nannyberries, grapes, and wild raisins. Some soft mast is not eaten until late fall, early winter, or even late winter and early spring. Examples of these fruits include barberry, winterberry, multiflora rose hips, and highbush cranberries. It is thought that some of these fruits may not be as palatable to wildlife until they have been frozen for a period.

When tracking animals in the winter I have often followed their footprints in the snow to crops of multiflora rose or barberries. The multiflora rose, in particular, produces massive crops nearly every year. Although this plant is disliked by many naturalists as an invasive, exotic plant (meaning it is not native to our area and really can take over large areas of a plant community) it is a valuable winter food source for many animals.

One of the best ways of observing wildlife is to locate some of these hard and soft mast crops, learn when the fruit is available and edible, and stake out the area to see which animals are utilizing the forage. This can be a real learning experience. For instance, although we think of red fox and coyotes as being primarily carnivores, I have observed them eating large quantities of blackberries, dewberries, and raspberries in midsummer. Another surprise was sitting over a stand of arrowwood in hopes of seeing some partridge feasting away at this plant and learning that black bears absolutely love this berry to the point that they will eat every last piece of fruit on an arrowwood shrub.

Although soft mast is critical to the survival of our mammals and birds, it cannot compare to vast of food supplied by hard mast-bearing plant species. A red oak with a diameter of about twenty inches can produce a half of ton of acorns during peak years. Red oaks have peak crops every other year or so, depending upon the weather. White oaks, which are scarce in Heath, produce moderate crops every year. The acorn of the white oak is actually preferred by most wildlife as it does not have as much tannic acid and is therefore not as bitter. Beech trees can produce huge crops of nuts, usually the year after a rainy, warm summer. Next year should be a very good beechnut year. Black bears will climb beech trees to gather the nuts and their claw marks can often be located in the smooth gray bark of the beech tree.

Heath is blessed with large areas of wild field, forest, and wetland. Within these areas there are many different types of plant communities. All of this plant diversity means great forage opportunities for wildlife and great opportunities for us humans to appreciate an aspect of the natural environment that makes Heath such a special place.

Ireland Reminiscence



Jack and Beverly Cable at Cliffs of Moher, Ireland.

Jack and I were able to take a remarkable trip to Ireland with a group of folks all related to Vermont Public Radio. What misconceptions we flew off with!

A shillelagh is a stick made out of black thorn and has some daunting, sharp knots on its shaft—or so I thought. In actuality, it is made of the very hard black thorn but of its root, and as a hammer, was or is, used as a cudgel in “faction fights.” Faction fight: a self-descriptive rumble very often in a pub if opposing forces met there.

Well, my presumption was incorrect - what else did I not paint correctly of the Emerald Isle? Plenty!

I thought of Ireland as a poor place such as was painted in *Angela's Ashes*. Not so today, Ireland is enjoying a renaissance, so to speak, fueled by the infusion of money from the United States and from the European Union. EU projects are flourishing - any public project flies a blue flag with gold stars. And the countryside is a welcoming place for new companies and business. (Yes, Gateway and Intel to name a couple) And the climate allows new housing and development.

Being further north than we are in New England, Ireland must be colder. No, Ireland is an island that is situated in the midst of the Gulf Stream. To travel around the corner and see oak trees snuggled up to a palm tree was a surprise! And huge hedges of small flowered fuchsia bushes were wonderful. Jack looked for and saw no great number of barns because cattle - and there were many of them crunching green pastures - were kept outside for at least eleven months of the year. And hay wasn't needed to be harvested. We saw some gigantic bales, but they were of straw. We did see more stone walls than even there are in Vermont. Some of them were almost eight feet tall!

There was plenty of green in the fields, eaten by cattle and sheep alike. But not all of Ireland was green. What a vast seemingly desert the Burren were! So much rock, much of it limestone, caused spies of Oliver Cromwell to report back to England in the 17th century that it was a land where “there was not enough water to drown a man; not enough tree to hang him, and not enough dirt to bury him.” We learned that the natural history of the area is not quite that extreme, but Cromwell is still remembered for his perfidy. (The first slaves to be sent to the New World were Irish!)

The Potato Famine of Ireland in the 1840s is remarked over in America. But to see some of the masses of graves on

a lone hillside does make the famine even more forlorn. Certainly it affects a national consciousness.

Jack had his first beer in 60 years! And in a pub in Ireland, Guinness beer is very good. The entire pub atmosphere, whether it is for lunch, afternoon tea, or evening carousing, is always welcoming. The same evening we saw a show where there was singing and Irish step-dancing. This was after a glass of Bailey's Irish Cream served in a Waterford crystal tumbler.. My goodness!

We had anticipated and planned for wet weather and had very little gloom. Our fellow tourists were all nice people and no one was disagreeable. All the worst-case scenarios were unfounded. Ireland is a place that Jack and I would return to- in a minute!

~Beverly Cable

The Stone Cottage

The Stone Cottage located at 17 West Main Street was built in 1933 by Mary Louise Robbins who, according to Elizabeth Niebuhr Sifton “liked building and rebuilding places” and “had cabins and cottages all over the place.” Mrs. Robbins and her husband, Howard Chandler Robbins, Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, first came to Heath in 1916. They purchased the pre-Revolutionary house which they named “Robbinswood” and much of the surrounding land. The Stone Cottage was built next door and was used as a guest cottage. Reinhold and Ursula Niebuhr rented it for a few years before buying it on September 4, 1941.

Elizabeth Sifton in her *Yale Review* essay entitled “The Serenity Prayer” said of her summers in Heath, “For nearly twenty years we spent our long holiday, Memorial Day to Labor Day, in a village in Northwestern Massachusetts with an unusual summer colony.

“Auntie Lou...designed and built a guest house next door to the Robbinses' own beautiful place. Between, a sloping flower-filled field was bisected by a brook that gurgled out of a culvert under the road and ran plashing and bubbling through beds of wild watercress to one of the three ponds that Uncle Howard contrived along its course. My parents first rented this little house from Louise and then bought it just about the time the war broke out.

“The rather clumsy but charming design of the Stone Cottage featured a westerly view (of course) toward Mount Greylock, eight miles away...The Stone Cottage was built into the meadow hillside on two levels and surrounded by terraces that my mother turned into a lovely garden. You entered at the back of the second floor and were supposed to descend via two circular staircases to a living room below...but since Auntie Lou had characteristically built the house right on top of - or, anyway, very near - a spring, the living (room) was always moldy so we used it for ping pong and storing bicycles and lived entirely upstairs.”

The “unusual summer colony” to which Mrs. Sifton refers in her essay included such notables, in addition to her theologian and author father and Dean Robbins, Justice Felix Frankfurter, and the Rt. Rev. Angus Dun, the Episcopal Bishop of Washington, D.C. Bishop Dun lived in another former Robbins cottage across the street from the Niebuhrs. Several other Episcopalian clergy also made Heath their summer home.

(“The Stone Cottage” continued on page 7)

(“The Stone Cottage” continued from page 6)

During the summer months, the members of the Heath Union Church had the opportunity to hear these clerics preach. According to Heath Historian Ed Calver, “Summer congregations were naturally large, and most of the vacationing clergy volunteered for services - which allowed the parson to go off on a vacation himself. Attendance was even larger than usual if the preacher was Howard Robbins, Angus Dun, or Reinhold Niebuhr.”

And from Mrs. Sifton’s memory: “In Heath’s Union Church, more or less Congregational, July and August Sundays often found visiting clerics in the pulpit, and my father was one of them...light streamed through the big rectangles of clear glass windows into the spare, monochrome hall; this was quintessential rural New England at its Sunday best.”

It was from the Heath pulpit in 1943, that Niebuhr first spoke his “Serenity Prayer.” After the service, Dean Robbins asked for a copy. Ursula Niebuhr, in a letter to the editor of the *Berkshire Eagle* on July 13, 1978, explained how the prayer came to be so widely known. “My husband reached into his pocket and handed it over to Dr. Robbins. Dr Robbins asked him if he might have it printed in a monthly bulletin which was issued by the Commission on Social Justice of the then Federal Council of Churches of which he, Dr. Robbins, was then chairman. This was in the early days of World War II. After this, the prayer had quite a history. The USO or some such organization asked for the use of it and copies were printed, I believe, in the millions.” (Note: Thereafter, the prayer was used by many groups, including Alcoholics Anonymous, with and without permission, and with and without acknowledging its author.)

The Niebuhrs sold the cottage in 1956 to John Linzee of Berlin, MA, and moved to Stockbridge where an ailing Reinhold died and was buried in 1971.

~ Jane deLeeuw

For the Heath Historical Commission

The Serenity Prayer

Elizabeth Sifton, Reinhold Niebuhr’s daughter, regaled us with wonderful tales of her childhood summers in Heath and the Stone Cottage, at the Annual Meeting and Dinner of the Heath Historical Society in 2002. She has written a book entitled *The Serenity Prayer, Faith and Politics in Times of Peace and War*. Published in October by W.W. Norton, the book was reviewed by Ann Hulbert in the *New York Times Book Review* (November 2).

Mrs. Sifton opens Chapter I with the following: *For about twenty years, from the mid 30s to the mid 50s, my family spent our long summer holidays - from Memorial Day to Labor Day, if we were lucky - in Heath, a farming village in a remote corner of northwestern Massachusetts.*

Heath and its residents, past and present, figure prominently throughout the book and in the review, both of which are available in the Heath Free Public Library.



Rays Of Interest

“Women, Roses and Fish” A True Fish Story!

By Raymond Pettengill

At the mouth of the Merrimack River, which flows past Newburyport, MA, and Plum Island, there are two jetties that extend out into the Atlantic Ocean. The turbulence and undertow in the river between these jetties caused by the tides, river flow, and the wind, can be disastrous to small craft. This is also one of the best striper and blue fishing spots on the Eastern seaboard.

While fishing in this area, alone and from my 18-foot BlueFin (definitely a small craft), dragging a big “Blue Atom” lure with three treble hooks attached to a 30-pound test line, I snagged onto what I thought must be a rock. After reversing the engine to follow up on the line it started peeling off the reel again so I knew it was no rock. I turned the boat and followed to gain some line.

With the tide, river current, and the wind on his side, the fish started to drag me perilously close to the rocks of the south jetty. I had to set the drag on the reel up to snub up the fish while reversing the engine to hold my position. Fortunately the rod was short and stiff with little bend so it was possible to fight the fish and stay off the rocks. I have no idea how long this contest lasted but finally got him close enough so I could see it was a big bluefish with all three of the treble hooks attached to him. Blues have a vicious set of teeth so I made sure he was out of commission by clumping him soundly on the head two or three times with a hard wood club. He weighed a little over 28 pounds and filled a large cooler that had some ice in it.

By now it was getting late in the day so I started home. Before getting to route 495 I spotted a truck parked on the roadside with a sign which read, “Roses for sale.” As the time would be later getting home than I had led my dear wife to think, I figured perhaps it would be a good idea to get her a dozen roses to smooth the way for me a little. It had been a hot day and the roses were a bit wilted so I got them for \$4.00 and had to put them in the cooler with the fish to keep them as fresh as could be on the way home.

At the time of this episode, a rather refined lady who lived in Heath had told me she liked bluefish and would like some if I got one. I swung up into her driveway and showed her the fish. She took one look and said, “That’s way too big for me to take care of.” I gave her one of the roses, which she thanked me for, and drove to another place where a woman lived who I knew loved fish. After knocking on the door and getting no answer I placed the fish on her flat rock doorstep and placed a rose on it. As it turned out she and her husband were doing chores in a barn down the road from the house. Her husband called out, “Who’s that up there?” When I told him it was me he asked me to come on down. When I told his wife that I had left a fish on her doorstep she went up to the house to take care of it before the cat got it. After I visited with her husband for a bit she came back and gave me a big hug and a thank-you for the rose. When I finally got home and handed the ten roses that were left to my wife she took one sniff and yelled, “fish” and threw them in the sink.

Sometimes men do not understand women!

HEATH LADIES AID



Front row, left to right: Pearl Tanner, Belle Dickinson, Ella Churchill. Second row: Pearl Packard, Marion Patterson, Edith Gleason, Anna Burrington. Third row: Grace Landstron, Blance Coats (behind), Hannah Burrington. Standing: Maude Fairbanks, Flora Howes, Mary Hicks, and Esther Dickinson.

In 1985 Esther Dickinson wrote an article for the *Heath Herald* (October/November 1985) giving a history of the Heath Ladies Aid. She tells of the beginning in the late 1920s of a group called The Thimble Club which, in about 1924, was officially organized and called The Heath Ladies Aid. She lists the presidents at that time as Anna Burrington, Hannah Burrington, Mildred Crowningshield, Edith Royer, Belle Dickinson, Mary Sherman, Ruth Churchill, and Leslie Bradbury. Esther Dickinson was secretary and treasurer until she became ill in the 1990s, and Edith Royer became president and secretary. Edith held this office until 2001 when she went to live at The Buckley Nursing Home in Greenfield. She was followed in these offices by Charlene Churchill and now Alli Thane-Stetson.

There are a few changes since that time. The earlier group met once a month, whereas we meet twice a month. The earlier group had many more suppers in Sawyer Hall and Esther relates "...remember the suppers in Sawyer Hall. Bringing the water in 40 qt. milk cans, and cooking on an oil stove. The coffee was made in a copper wash boiler.

"Several years we had plays, or some sort of entertainment after the supper(s), *Our Town* in 1951 was the last full length play. A couple of years we had an evening auction, with Reinhold Niebuhr as auctioneer. In 1924 there was a baby show...

"In the early years, it was the ladies that prepared the oyster dinners that preceded the annual December church meetings. It was the Ladies Aid that planned the town meeting dinners, when they were held the first Monday in February. It gave the voters a chance to mingle and visit their neighbors."

Now our suppers are not as frequent although we still host weddings and funerals and cater a few parties. Now we meet at the Community Hall. We still have our July "Fair," our November "Christmas Fair," and our potluck Christmas party in December. While the Community Hall was being repaired a year ago, we met at Dorothy Sessions' home as we will probably do again when the Hall closes in January for renovation.

Esther mentions that the most popular items for sale were aprons. Not so now. We still sew the same popular rag dolls, sock monkeys, balsam pillows, and pot holders. We use new fabrics now, unknown at that time, and substitute the new polar fleece for the old wool and flannel material and Styrofoam balls instead of wooden ones for Christmas decorations. Besides the usual kitchen items, towels, dishcloths, etc., we have added no-sew lap robes for TV watching, rice bags for achy joints, home-grown and ground horseradish for the strong palates, and lavender sachets for the boudoir.

The Ladies Aid is not a church group although we have a moment of devotions at each meeting. We do donate to the church and parsonage, recently giving \$4000 for a lady's room to be installed in the new church building project. We also give two scholarships for two deserving Heath students each May. We give to Good Neighbors, Salvation Army, Alternatives, Meals on Wheels, Heath School Library, and any other needy causes in town.

To quote Esther again, "The Ladies Aid is a group of ladies that like to get together and work together on projects for our church and town." We meet the second and fourth Thursday of each month. We bring our own sandwich and take turns providing dessert. All ladies are welcome. Join us!

~ Alli Thane-Stetson

PTP News

The PTP had a wonderful Halloween celebration on Friday, October 31. We started the festivities off in the afternoon at school with each classroom constructing a scarecrow. A parade of costumes followed and then a school-wide scavenger hunt took place with a few "surprises" thrown in. Doug Wilkins entertained us after refreshments with songs and stories. It was a great afternoon and the weather couldn't have been better. Following evening trick or treating, we had a party at the Community Hall where kids gathered for games, fortune telling, "table-gating treats," hot chocolate served and provided by the Ladies Aid group and the Deckers, as well as cookies and cupcakes! It was a wonderful day and we thank everyone who helped out.

We have also been busy with several fund-raisers, our last one was for holiday wreaths and poinsettias, and soon we will be raffling off a Christmas tree. We are also trying to collect items to help Deb Lively and her woodworking projects with the children at school. Here is our wish list for her: Drill bits-breakage 118" and smaller, 2 1/2" and 2" drywall screws, 2 1/2" deck screws, wooden dowels 1/2," wooden wheels and pegs, rechargeable batteries (any size), exterior plywood for a new ramp, and spare varnish. If anyone can help Deb out, that would be great.

We want to remind everyone that we meet the third Thursday of each month, alternating times, either 3:30 p.m. or 6:30 p.m.. Call the school for the schedule. We would love to see you there.

~ Robin Jenkins, Co-chair

Finance Committee Report

As we approach the mid-year point of FY04 there has been some good news about acquiring another fire truck and concern about State Aid prospects for FY05.

Due to the efforts of David Cote and Gary Singley, who are active in the Heath Fire Department, and their wives Diane Cote and Judy Singley, a federal grant was awarded in the amount of \$250,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Town of Heath has to contribute 10% of the grant (\$25,000) as a condition for the balance of \$225,000. At this time the Town hopes it can meet the 10% requirement from a range of sources. After notice of the award was received there was some confusion and misunderstanding as to (1) whether or not the grant money could or should be used to pay for the fire truck purchased via the Annual Town Meeting vote and (2) whether or not the Town should acquire two fire trucks. A petition was circulated to ask for a Special Town Meeting (STM) for the purpose of rescinding the ATM vote in June to use Stabilization Fund money in the amount of \$100,000 and a loan for \$95,000 so that the grant money could be applied to the purchase of one fire truck. At the same time the Fire Department was explaining the need for two trucks, which had been mentioned at the ATM but not really discussed in detail enough to avoid a misunderstanding. Town Counsel Kopelman and Paige were asked to review commitments made and the terms of the grant. In a three-page letter it was determined that the Town may not vote to rescind the vote taken at the ATM where a contract has been executed. To do so violates the rights of the third party and engenders a range of potential expenses. (The Selectboard had signed a contract in late June to purchase the fire truck and in fact paid some money up front upon delivery of the chassis at the manufacturer resulting in a savings of \$1,749.) The Selectboard is the contracting authority and a town meeting vote cannot direct the cancellation of a contract. Further, the terms of the grant were for a "pumper-type" support truck, whereas the purchased truck was an "attack-type" vehicle used to get to fires first. Thus, it appears that the awarded funds cannot be used for another type vehicle. Based on Counsel's opinion the petition was withdrawn, but will be discussed at a Selectboard meeting. Two things have become evident as a result of this misunderstanding. One is that the petition indicates there is real concern about the level of property taxes in Heath and the other is the need for some administrative guidelines when grants are processed.

The Mohawk Trail Regional School District (MTRSD) budget was increased 11% for FY04 even after substantial cuts were made in personnel and programs. The State's Chapter 70 award to the District was cut \$1,440,846 (20%) and transportation support was cut \$472,000 (50%), a huge amount. Fortunately, between the use of Reserve and Medicaid funds the increase was held to the 11% level. 159 out of 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts were included in the 20% category! It is very debatable as to whether or not the allocation of Chapter 70 monies was fair to all parties. The Legislature is reviewing the Ed Reform Formula (again) to address this problem. There was "pothole" money appropriated in the amount of \$7 million to help alleviate the situation, a stopgap amount of aid. The

MTRSD has applied for \$200,000 in "pothole" money, the maximum it can apply for. Awards were expected at the end of November. Monies, if any, will be used to help with programs for this year; it will not affect for FY04. One other significant event has occurred in the school finance area. The Town of Heath was given support by the State Department of Education when it constructed the Heath School. These monies, known as SBAB funds, were assured bond funds and enabled Heath to get a mortgage from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Starting this year, FY04, the State reduced its payments by 1% or \$1,970 (we have received \$197,018 per year) due to State budget considerations. The Selectboard and FinCom are writing a strong letter to the Governor and Legislators protesting the State's renegeing on its agreement and setting a dangerous precedent.

("Finance Committee Report" continued on page 10)

What's to Like About Winter

All its feats and treats...

Blizzards

Christmas

Drifts in fancy shapes

Eating snow sugar

Footprints

Gloves

Hoarfrost on windows

Ice-sparkled trees

Jackets

Kitchen smells

Looking at snow falling

Moon-bright light

New Year's Eve

Orion

Presents under the tree

Quiet

Roaring woodstove fires

Shoveling—NOT!

Tasting snowflakes

Under the cozy quilt

Vows for 2004

Walking on snowshoes

Xcountry skiing

Yelling when the sled...

...Zooms

~ Kathy Stein



Library Lines

Thank You, Thank You



By Charlene Churchill

In this season of thanksgiving and celebrations, I want to devote a portion of this column to thanking those who help our library provide the services it offers to our community. First, I would like to thank the many volunteers who donate of their time to help with library projects. We would not be able to get through Bookmobile visits, Friends of the Library fund-raising events, and numerous other library projects without the hundreds of hours of help from dedicated volunteers.

I would also like to thank those who donate/recycle their no-longer-wanted books to the library. It is these donations that help enhance our collection and also help stock the Friends' book sale at the Heath Fair each year. Thank you again to all who have helped the library in any way this year!

Some interesting library facts:

- Five times more people visit U. S. public libraries each year than attend U. S. professional and college football, basketball, baseball, and hockey games combined.
- If library patrons were to pay the average sporting game ticket price of approximately \$35 per visit, libraries would generate more than \$39 billion in annual revenues.

Source: OCLC Report: Libraries: How They Stack Up. www.oclc.org/info/compare/

New at the library: *The Known World* by Edward P. Jones - National Book Award Finalist for Fiction; *Six Modern Plagues and How We Are Causing Them* by Mark Walters; *The Big House: A Century in the Life of an American Summer Home* by George Howe Colt - National Book Award Finalist for Nonfiction; *Wolves of the Calla* by Stephen King; *The Book Against God: A Novel* by James Wood; *The Five People You Meet In Heaven* by Mitch Albom - author of *Tuesdays With Morrie*.

Community Hall/Council On Aging and Senior Center News

Since restrictions on the usage of the Community Hall have been put in place due to the grant the Town received for renovations of a senior center, I thought I would try to clear up some matters.

The upper hall still can be used by the community and private parties. Unless the Senior Center is sponsoring or benefiting from the event, the kitchen will not be available for public use, however, the elevator and bathrooms will be available. Anyone who wishes to reserve the upper hall may call Dolly Churchill at 337-6680. These restrictions further prohibit any municipal events taking place in the building.

The Senior Center will be closed January 1, 2004, in preparation for the work to begin in February. After five years (September 2009), the hall may resume operating as it has in the past.

The Hall Committee and the Council on Aging have been working together on plans for the new kitchen and dining hall. The Council on Aging oversees the senior meal site. Our last senior meal will be on December 18, 2003. They will begin again when we are up and running.

Both committees wish to thank-you, folks, for being so supportive in our endeavors, both past and present, and, hopefully, future. We especially would like to express our appreciation to the Heath Historical Society for their generous donation.

~ Val Kaempfer
Community Hall
Committee and Council on Aging

("Finance Committee Report" continued from page 9)

While it is a bit early to plan for FY05, it is appropriate to start thinking about it. The Association of Town Finance Committees (ATFC) recently reported that State tax collections were up \$159 million in the first quarter from last year - 4.4% and totaled \$3.79 billion for the same period. Some income was flat such as withholding and sales tax income. However, and there is always a however, Medicaid continues to be a major problem with a 12% increase of \$785 million plus the State's pension obligations add another \$621 million to the budget. There is another nearly \$400 million in increases in the budget. All together a \$2 billion shortfall is forecast at this time. Can't get too comfortable with that news. We will keep you informed.

We wish everyone the best for the Holidays.

~ Finance Committee
Dave Howland, Ned Wolf,
Charlene Churchill,
David Cote, Budge Litchfield

The Herald encourages all Heath writers and those who have never thought they could but have been itching to give it a try to submit their creative efforts on any subject of their choosing.

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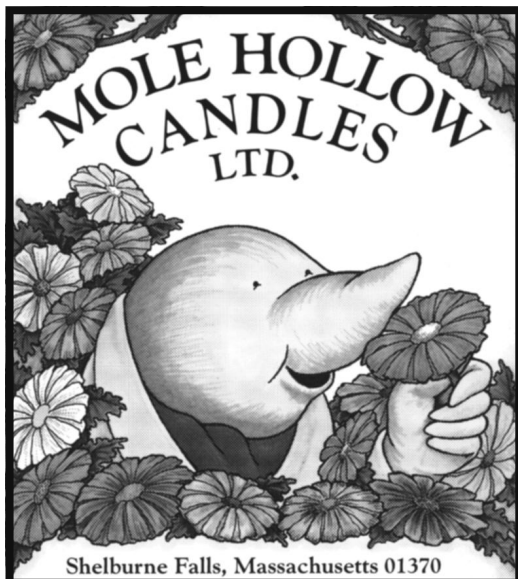


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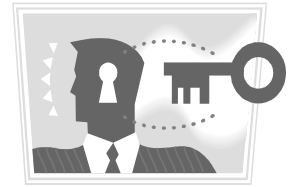
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Town Nurse Notes

The Key to Positive Thinking



By Joanne Fortune, RN

The short days, the frigid weather, and shoveling snow can pull us down, so I've jotted some thoughts about staying positive. Our behavior plays a role on our physical health, and our thought choices and actions have a huge effect on our mental and emotional health.

Good mental health has to do with how we actually *interpret* the events in our lives. It's a choice. For example, a job or relationship loss can bring us a range of reactions from excitement to anger. An optimist sees life as a series of events or opportunities that lead from one to the next. These events offer healthy and valuable lessons. The more painful the experience, the greater the lesson.

"Negative" emotions do come up. When we hide them or deny them, they have a sneaky habit of returning. If we allow ourselves to feel the emotion, look at the source, talk about it, forgive ourselves and others, it will dissipate and we will be stronger for it.

When we see daily activities as opportunities rather than just another burden, our enjoyment increases. When we consider our job an ongoing opportunity to be a productive, creative service to society, when we do the laundry, dishes, and grocery shopping with a light step and gratitude, we carry a feeling of optimism, not resentment. And when we smile, the people around us smile.

Feeling grateful for what we have is being positive and optimistic, a vibrant and healthy attitude instead of thinking about the things we don't have.

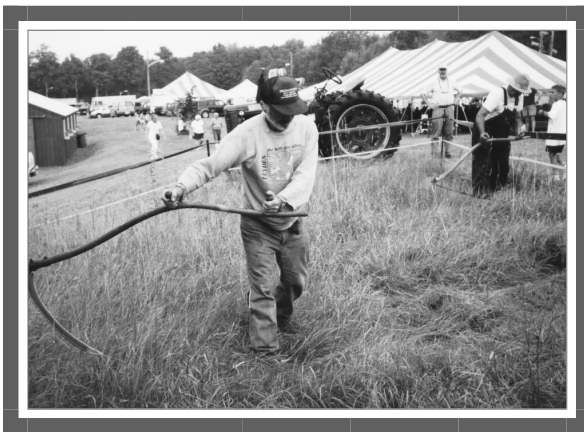
When we learn to say "Yes!" to life rather than believing we "can't" do that, we will be happier and more interesting to ourselves and others.

Sometimes we expect that someone else can (and will) make us happy and that they intuitively know what we need and like. We can't depend on that. We need to be able to care for ourselves emotionally. Additionally, it saps our energy to always be trying to win approval and making others happy at our expense. We can't be there for others if our own emotional and mental health is pessimistically sagging.

Let's learn to laugh at ourselves, laugh at a lousy joke, laugh at someone else's laughter, and just laugh for the sake of laughing!

If you want to laugh, come to my office hour at the Community Hall on Tuesday afternoons from 12 - 1:00 p.m. If you or anyone you know would like a home visit, please call me at 774-2958. Thank you.

Heath Historical Society



Walt Sherman (foreground), and Carroll Stowe (background), take part in the scything event at the 2003 Heath Fair.

At the Annual Meeting and Supper held September 27, in the Community Hall, Eric Bye of Chester, VT, presented a program on the evolution of 19th century American music. - its origin, traditions, and songs. He demonstrated the history of the banjo using early and modern instruments. The Community Hall Committee again served an outstanding dinner. The Reverend Murray Newman offered prayers before the meal and also for deceased members, John Dyer, Ruth Churchill

and Russell Johnson.

The meeting highlighted the work at Fort Shirley with the graveled path an excellent improvement. We are currently planning a fence enclosure using the footprint of the fort and signage is being pursued. Because of the resignation of Vice President Eileen Tougas, the Board appointed Jane de Leeuw to fill Eileen's unexpired term. Eric Grinnell was appointed a director to fill Jane's unexpired term. The members voted and approved the following offices: treasurer, David Howland - 2 years; secretary, Ned Wolf - 2 years; director, Michael Coe - 3 years.

Many people enjoyed the exhibits and purchased society items and raffle tickets at the Soloman Temple Barn during the Heath Fair. New acquisitions in the barn include a tin mailbox used to transport mail between Heath and Shelburne Falls. The Dickinson wagon on which it's exhibited may have been used as the carrier. Signs from Burnt Hill Farm were also on display.

The scything exhibit on Saturday drew a good crowd as seasoned craftsmen demonstrated the old time haying event.

Plans are being made with the Heath Elementary School for the fifth grade class to tour the Historical Society buildings and Fort Shirley in the spring of 2004.

We would like to have more Heath residents and friends join the society. We are preserving Heath's past. Help us do this with membership and donation of items.

~ Jack Cable
President

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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."

An Attempt At Using Natural Resources

By Carroll Stowe

Sometime ago I had been engaged to create a hay wagon rack for a neighbor. This rack was to be 18-feet long and eight-feet wide. This unit would have been ready for the 2003 hay season had I been able to find logs long enough to saw 18'x 6x6". A major holdup was that the local mill was out of operations from last fall until early summer. That would seem a good excuse for this project not getting done.

All this time I've tried to find two logs big enough and long enough to fill the bill. Eighteen-foot logs to square up 6x6 don't show up handily at the roadside. Recently while going by way of the road through the H.O. Cook State Forest to visit my youngest brother in Halifax, VT, I thought I'd found a tree to serve the purpose of this needed timber. This tree was quite accessible on the left side of the forestry road. It was a blown-down tree and was more than large enough to do the job. I was some pleased to have found this stick of timber. It lay there just going to waste, and I needed it.

My original plan was to be there at daylight of a Sunday morning and harvest said timber. I suppose it could properly be called stealing. I lay awake in the early hours of that Sunday and laid out my plan to the best of my expertise. Somewhere in my thought process it came to me that perhaps for the recipient, a year ago, of the Good Citizen Award, this action was not the best way to fly.

I was able to get the name of the fellow who is in charge of our state forest land and made contact with him and was given permission to help myself to this spruce tree.

After church the next Sunday I proceeded to harvest this fallen evergreen. I was able to limb it out and mark three 18-foot logs and a 12-foot and hitch to it with four-wheel drive pickup. It started to come out of the road as I had planned, and I was rather pleased with my early success and then the end of the 12-foot log broke off. This tree had not looked like it was so far gone bad. I pulled it all out of its resting place and got it out of the road.

Such a disappointment! I was so pleased to be able to find this tree. So I'm back to square one as far as having timber to build the neighbor's hayrack. It's good haying is over for 2003. Perhaps I will be able to get prepared for 2004.

It would have been rather comical if I'd attempted to harvest this timber without permission and gotten apprehended and the stuff bad in the bargain. So much for trying to live outside the law. I described this plan of getting this timber without permission to some friends and my sleeplessness about the progress and they said if you have to think about it, don't go through with it. I learn new points of law all the time. That tree could have laid there all by itself without anyone's permission and rotted back into the ground.

I am still greatly in need of some forest product that will fill this timber requirement. I am willing to pay for this timber at a fair price for all concerned.

Heath Students at The Academy Win!

The Academy at Charlemont had a great fall soccer season this year. Whether playing in rain or shine, snow or sleet, The Academy Aardvarks stuck with it, never gave up, and showed great determination towards the game. On Wednesday, November 19, The Academy had its seasonal sports awards ceremony. Heath took home six out of about 20 awards at The Academy.

Kurt Wilkins, a junior at The Academy, has amazing soccer skills and is an all-round natural athlete. He received the Captains Award for the Boys Varsity team.

Chris (CJ) Wilkins is a phenomenal 8th grade soccer player who plays on a traveling soccer team as well as playing for The Academy. His traveling team, the Western United, won the state championship. CJ won the award for Best Offense for the JV boys at The Academy.

Reed Phillips is a new student at the school in 7th grade. He played soccer in Heath and plays now at The Academy. An excellent and enthusiastic soccer player, he received the Sportsmanship Award for the JV boys.

Grace Phillips, a freshman at The Academy, who regularly plays sweep for the JV girls, took home the Best Defense Award.

Corin (Cori) Marsh is a junior and an awesome soccer player. She also plays in a young women's league at Indoor Action. She won the Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award for the Varsity Girls.

Devon Ingraham-Adie, a new student at The Academy in 8th grade, had never played on a soccer team before this year. His natural ability really broke through when he showed the team what he could do. He received Most Improved Player for the JV boys.

Congratulations everyone, it was a great year! ☺

~ Grace Phillips

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Selectboard's Report

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

Business - In addition to the regular business, the Board has been working on updating the Town Safety and Personnel policies, reviewing the Open Space and Recreation Plan, and responding to surveys for Homeland Defense related issues. Some progress has been made on the former Three-Town landfill closing. Additional monitoring wells have been installed on the site. A bill to include funds for a portion of the closing costs has been proposed and passed by the state legislature.

Community Hall - Design work for the renovations to the Community Hall and the new Senior Center has been completed and construction bidding documents are near completion. A public hearing on the project will be held sometime in December or January. The project will be put out for construction bids in January, and work is planned to begin on the inside of the building later in the winter. As a reminder, due to receipt of Council on Aging monies for renovations to the new Senior Center, use of the first floor of the Community Hall is limited to Senior Center-sponsored functions for a period of five years from the date of the grant.

Sawyer Hall - Construction on the Sawyer Hall project is nearing completion. The elevator hoistway is up and the siding has been installed on it. The elevator equipment has been delivered and installation will begin soon. The interior finish work will begin as soon as the rough framing and electrical inspections are completed. The project is expected to be finished, except for exterior painting, by the end of December. Exterior painting will be postponed until spring.

New Fire Engine - The Town has received a notice of award of a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) grant for up to \$250,000 for the purchase of a fire engine. It is a matching grant program with the Town required to put up 10% of the grant amount. David and Diane Cote, Gary and Judy Singley, and other members of the Fire Department put many hours of hard work into writing and submitting the application.

In fact, this is the third year that Heath has applied for this grant. We all should be grateful to them for their efforts. A Special Town Meeting needs to be held to accept the grant and appropriate the matching funds. The Fire Department is working on specifications for a pumper/tanker to replace the ailing 1961 vintage truck currently in use. A question was raised by some residents as to whether or not the grant could be used to fund the new fire engine approved by the Annual Town Meeting (ATM). The terms of the grant would not permit it to be used for any other purposes than those stated in the application. The Fire Truck approved at ATM should be delivered in the next month or two.

Heath On-line - Take some time to visit the Town's home page 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. Send messages to any board

or individual via the e-mail address, or visit the Heath home page.

~ Heath Selectboard
Thomas Lively - Chair
Brian De Vriese
Sheila Litchfield



From the Desk of the Town Coordinator

By Rebecca Jurek

Grant Initiatives - The handicapped accessibility project at Town Office is winding down and will be complete by the end of the calendar year. Many thanks are extended to the contractors, grant administrators, and staff who participated in the process to allow for the elimination of barriers at Town Hall through these improvements.

The upgrades to the Senior Center and Community Hall building will be getting underway in January. Progress reports will be provided on a regular basis.

The Town has made a commitment to apply for housing rehabilitation and economic development funds through the next round of Community Development Block Grants. The application being submitted will include Heath as the lead town, along with the towns of Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Hawley, and Shelburne. A public hearing was held November 18 to solicit public input.

Clean Sweep Day a Success!! As an added plus to belonging to the Franklin County Solid Waste District, the Selectboard decided to host a bulky item disposal day at the Transfer Station on October 25. Residents from Heath and the West County area were able to take advantage of this 'almost anything goes' day. A thank-you must be extended to Carroll Stowe and to Jeff Simmons for helping me take care of what seemed like a full day of business in just slightly over four hours. A thank-you is also in order to Lorin Gowdy who provided assistance on the spur of the moment as well. It cannot be overstated that residents extended their appreciation to us and to town officials for organizing the day. It's hard to believe how many televisions you can accumulate over the years... With that being said, looking forward to seeing you and your 'stuff' when we host this day again next year. If you have any other questions or concerns relating to the Waste District, please contact me, your representative to the District. Thank-you again to everyone for helping to provide this service and for making this day a tremendous success.

Homeland Security - A big Thank-You to our Chief of Police, Emergency Management Director, Fire Chief, and the Board of Health staff for their assistance in helping to complete the government-mandated surveys in a timely fashion. Many hours went into the completion of these documents, and we are hopeful these endeavors will prove beneficial with funding for technical assistance and equipment at a later date. Thank-you again for your efforts.

("From the Desk of" continued on page 17)

Was It a Rat I Saw? or, Never Odd or Even

Both acknowledged their problem. Palindromomaniacs Anonymous hadn't gotten them over it yet, but they were hopeful, not to mention desperate. Kate Bailey heard "Tiny Bubbles" coming from a car stereo as she entered the church basement where the meeting was about to get under way. "Oh no, Don Ho!" she muttered, kicking herself. She met her fellow PA, Bob, who struck up conversation with her.

"Madam, I'm Adam," he lied.

"You're pathetic, Bob, that's a tired one," said Kate.

"I may be, but look at that guy over there," said Bob, gesturing toward a fellow sulking in the corner. "Poor Dan is in a droop."

"He lived as a devil, eh?" said Kate, immediately disgusted with herself. "What am I saying? I don't even know the guy. Dammit, I'm mad!"

Dan overheard himself being discussed, and berated himself inwardly, thinking "Reviled did I live, said I, as evil I did deliver."

"Don't beat yourself up, Kate, we all struggle. You need to find other interests, is all. I, madam, I made radio! So I dared! Am I mad? Am I?"

"Yes, Bob, I think that's obvious."

On the other side of the room, Michael Wilmeth was loitering near the refreshments talking to Dr. Steve, who was holding forth on his weight-loss program, which featured "no lemons, no melon."

"Doc note. I dissent," said Michael. "A fast never prevents a fatness. I diet on cod." He spied Kate, the new PA he had noticed at the last meeting. "Doc, I understand Kate swears by sausages for losing weight."

"Go hang a salami. I'm a lasagna hog," the doctor retorted. "When is this meeting going to start? I'm losing my grip again. I need a cigar."

"Cigar? Toss it in a can, it is so tragic." Michael had yet to kick the habit at all, even for a day.

Just then the meeting was called to order, and the assembled palindromomaniacs took their seats, clutching cups of coffee nervously. The usual recitations of how palindromes wrought havoc in the lives of those who abused them were offered. Several people stood up to announce they had gone seven days or a month or six months without a palindrome, and were applauded. A man who introduced himself as Earl rose to tell about a recent trip to Oklahoma, during which during a round of golf with his brother-in-law he was sorely tempted to speak in palindromes, but stuck to his resolve to stay clean. Several people chimed in with praise for his willpower.

"I didn't want to fall back into my old ways, and I didn't. thank God. It's a new life for me now," he said, but his eyes took on a glazed look, he began to sweat, and blurted: "Tulsa night life: filth, gin, a slut!"

The mood in the group fell like a failed soufflé.

"A slut nixes sex in Tulsa!" shouted a woman in a business suit.

"Golf? No sir. Prefer prison flog!" offered Bob.

"Yo, Bob, mug a gumbo boy!" sniped Dan.

"Stab a nail at ill Italian bats!" Bob shot back.

Susanna, the meeting moderator, managed to regain control

over the group. Once everyone had quieted down, she gave a little pep talk, trying to make the best of a discouraging meeting.

"We are none of us perfect, but we are getting better, aren't we? Just keep coming to meetings. The fact that you all are here, not on the street spouting palindromes without even giving it a thought, shows you're on the right track. Are we not drawn onward, we few? Drawn onward to a new era?"

The meeting concluded with a collective groan. Kate caught up with Michael as the PAs filed out.

"What a disaster. I don't think these meetings are helping me," she said.

Michael shook his head.

"Me neither. In fact I think we set each other off. So much insanity in one room is a recipe for trouble."

"Want to go get a cup of something?"

"I was going to ask you the same, last week, but I didn't for some reason. I'm aloof; a fool am—" He stopped himself. "That is, I'm not very outgoing. Anyway, yes, let's go."

"Do you feel okay?"

"I feel... yes, better than okay. You're very easy to talk to. Without... You know -

"I feel it too. Normally I can't get five seconds into a conversation without a palindrome. Although able was I, ere I saw - damn, I almost blew it"

"But you didn't! And I didn't! It's as if we were meant to meet, to help each other, to -"

"Yes! It's easy with you, just to talk like normal people do. Without them. Without really even wanting to use them."

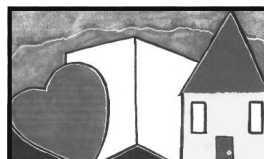
"I've dreamed of this!"

"So have I!"

And so, in time, Kate and Michael decided to be wed. Dew on roses or no, wed.

The wedding will take place this June, in Heath.

~ Michael Wilmeth



Friends of The Heath School Library

Thanks to all who made our second annual Book Fair a success: contributors to the voucher fund, the

World Eye Book Shop, Susan Todd, the teachers, children, and parents of the Heath School for their enthusiasm and appreciation, Tim Lively, and John Musacchio, and to the other good folk who came and found some book treasures to buy.

As always, all proceeds will go to buy books for our children's school library which we urge you to visit.

("From the Desk of" continued from page 16)

Budget for Next Year - The budget process for the next fiscal year will get underway in January. Meetings with department heads are to be scheduled. As a reminder, budget hearings are open to the public. Agendas for Selectboard meetings are always available upon request - simply contact me at Town Office or e-mail bos@townofheath.org.

Please take time to enjoy family and friends this holiday season. Happy Holidays to everyone!

Milestones

Born October 24, 2003, a daughter, **Arcia Jayne**, to Jason and Jennifer Johnson Heilman of Buckland; granddaughter of Russell "Bud" and Bette Johnson of Shelburne Falls, Dorothy Sherman of Charlemont, and Arnie and Teri Heilman of Livonia, MI; great-granddaughter of Estella MacLeod of Marlboro and **Ruth Johnson** of Heath.

Born October 27, 2003, a daughter, **Judea Eve**, to Joey and Angela Almeida Sonntag of Shelburne Falls; granddaughter of **Joseph Almeida** of Heath and Ray and Mary Sonntag of Shelburne Falls; great-granddaughter of Lee and Hilda Cormier of Acushnet.

Born November 13, 2003, a son, **Sean Garrett**, to Timothy Allen and Amie Peters of Shelburne; grandson of Terry Peters of Shelburne, Mark and Diane Dearborn of Wendell, and John and Saralynn Allen of Northfield; great-grandson of Kenneth and Sheila Chaffee of Hawley, Paul and Jean Wisley of Shelburne, **Dennis and Dawn Peters** of Heath, Edwin and Celia Allen of Montague, and Yolanda Arsenault of Greenfield, and great-great-grandson of Ann Trumble of Greenfield.



Pearl Duris of Jacksonville, Florida, died February 16, 2003, at the age of 95. Pearl and her husband Andrew in 1950 purchased and developed Burnt Hill Farm into a commercial blueberry farm. Jack Cable purchased the farm in 1966. Pearl's son Roland, also of Jacksonville, and at one time, owner of Colrain Inn, died May 20 at the age of 76. They were buried July 25 in the family plot in West Granville, MA.

Pearl is survived by one son, Andrew of Jacksonville. Roland is survived by a daughter, Susen Malnik, of Bernardston. Jack Cable officiated.

Phyllis Taber Wooten Kades was born on December 21, 1915, in Jamestown, NY. Phyllis was descended from a long line of New Bedford whalers beginning with Philip Taber, whose marriage was recorded in Dartmouth, MA, in 1630. Her great-grandfather, Asa Taber, left New Bedford after he had captained at least three multi-year whaling voyages. Asa's wife told him that the third trip, to the South Pacific in 1840, would be his last. Thus the family settled on the Erie Canal. But Phyllis rediscovered the urge to travel the world.

After attending Denison College and graduating from the University of Pittsburgh, Phyllis traveled widely, living in many different places including Anchorage, Alaska, and Rome, Italy, before settling in Heath and Long Boat Key, FL.

Phyllis's first husband, James A. Wooten, was president of Alaska Airlines. This provided her with many opportunities for world travel, including the Middle East, China, Africa and Europe.

Some of these journeys became adventures. Mr. Wooten won a contract to transport some 4,000 refugees from camps where they had been interned into Israel. The Yemenite Jews, some of whom had never seen an airplane before, believed they were the fulfillment of a Biblical prophesy promising a return to Israel "on

the wings of eagles." Phyllis's wanderlust had brought her at this time alone to Shanghai. While she was there, Shanghai fell into the hands of the Communists. The airlift provided Phyllis with a timely opportunity to escape. So she briefly became a volunteer stewardess on the "Magic Carpet" airlift that transported Jewish refugees from Aden and Shanghai to Tel Aviv in 1949-50.

During the early 1950s, Mr. Wooten built an airline called Near East Air Transport, which later became El Al Airlines. With the family fortunes significantly improved, Phyllis became a frequent visitor to Paris, becoming one of the first clients for Christian Dior's "New Look." At the time, she lived in a villa in Rome.

After she and Mr. Wooten divorced, Phyllis was married to Charles L. Kades from 1962 until his death in 1996. "Chuck", as he was affectionately known, lied about his age in order to serve his country in World War I. Later he was involved with the structuring of Roosevelt's New Deal. Chuck served again, now as a colonel in the U.S. Army, during World War II. He was the head of the Government Section of the U.S. Occupation of Japan under General MacArthur. In that capacity, Colonel Kades led the small group of lawyers who wrote the present Japanese constitution. He was often referred to as a "founding father" of modern Japan. He continued to provide legal advice to a variety of political figures and international businesses. This provided Phyllis with the opportunity to continue her travels through Europe and the Far East.

After their many adventures, Phyllis and Chuck spent much of their lives together at their beautiful Heath home, "Green Bough." Her prize-winning garden was often represented at the Heath Fair. She was an enthusiastic supporter of the Heath Historical Society and other cultural and charitable organizations. Many celebrated and historical persons enjoyed Phyllis's hospitality. She died of cancer on October 9 at the age of 87.

Phyllis is survived by her brother, Curtis H. Taber of Apopka, FL; her three children, Jewelle W. Bickford of New York City, James H. Wooten of Sarasota, FL., and William C. Wooten of New York City; her eight grandchildren, Laura C. Bickford of Hollywood, CA., Emily B. Lansbury of New York City, Jewelle Caroline Wooten and James Ninh Wooten of FL, Joshua Schenkein of New York City; and her son James's three adopted children, Hoa, Hoan, and Son Wooten; and her two great grandchildren, Elizabeth Laura and Natalie Rose Lansbury.

Interment was in Arlington National Cemetery on November 17

Alvin Mieczyslaw Kowacki of Erving died on November 1, 2002, of injuries sustained in an automobile accident.

Born in Dolsk, Poland, in 1930, he was the son of Antoni and Genowefa Kowacki. In 1939, he was deported in a freight car to Siberia with his family, and when liberated by the United States, was moved to Kenya and South Africa without his family. In 1948, he was reunited with his parents in England. In 1951 he came to the United States and worked in Detroit and Cleveland before joining the U.S. Army and serving in the Korean Conflict. After his honorable discharge, he married Rae A. Lattinville and, in 1953, settled in Easthampton and Williamsburg. He worked for the National Felt Company until 1968 when he and his wife moved their family to Erving where they operated the Erving Country Store.

In addition to his wife, his survivors include Heath accountant **Dale Kowacki**.



"In Memoriam"

Phyllis Kades - 1915-2003

Sitting with Phyllis Kades, for coffee, lunch, or dinner, was always like opening a chapter to a new book - a revealing of a person of grace who had lived many life experiences.

In her early motherhood, she was caring for three children, raising chickens, and tending a garden. Before long she and her family were in Rome, the base of her first husband's aviation service. Later she was to join her husband in the aviation business, occasionally serving as an air hostess. In this role she was to aid in the transportation to Israel of members of the Jewish community in China. She went on to participate in "Operation Magic Carpet," an airborne operation conducted by the Jewish Agency and the Israeli government, which transported nearly 50,000 Yemenite Jews to Israel in 1949-

Chuck was later to enter her life. Together they discovered Heath - a restful change from their life in Manhattan. They acquired "Green Bough," traveling north on many snowy weekends and eventually making Heath their base. Meanwhile Phyllis and Chuck had become the guardians of three adopted Vietnamese grandchildren whom they brought to Heath. The children, who knew no English, were enrolled in the Rowe School.

One of them, Son Wooten, is today employed in a Boston architectural firm. Throughout the years, he shared with Phyllis her interest in gardening and beautified her homes with gardens of great variety and color. Phyllis would plan a color scheme and order the plants; Son would then create the garden. A result was the prize-winning lilies shown every year at the Heath Fair.

Most of us in Heath will remember Phyllis as an engaging raconteur and a gracious and elegant hostess, who gathered friends together, with Chuck, to talk about his post-World War II assignment as a member of the MacArthur team in Japan. She was that and much more. She will be greatly missed.

~ Hazel Porter Maitland

Church News

Here at the Heath Union Church we are looking forward to the Christmas season and the time of remembering the birth of Jesus.

Plans are being made for the upcoming Christmas services. The Sunday morning service on December 21 will include special music as it has in the past. This service begins at 10:00 a.m. There will also be a Christmas Eve service which will begin at 7:00 p.m. There will be music and readings for the celebration of the birth of our Lord, as well as the candlelight that graces our sanctuary every year at this time.

The holiday season is a time of great festivity and busyness for almost everyone. We excitedly make plans and meet loved ones that we haven't spent time with for a long time. But it can also be a time of serious sorrow and depression for those who have lost loved ones, lost their jobs, or face loneliness for other reasons. As we go about our preparations this year, let us not neglect to say the kind word

or take the time to listen to the one who is unable to share in the happiness that we have. Jesus was sent to give us spiritual liberation. Let us pass on the hope of a better life to those around us during this Christmas season.

~ Hilma Sumner, Minister



News From Your Heath Fire Department

It's been a busy fall at the Fire Department. Our October drill consisted of going over laying, carrying, and rolling hose, along with refresher information about all the various fittings and adaptors that we carry. It was well attended.

Chief Mike Smith and several other firefighters made the annual pilgrimage to the Heath Elementary School for Fire Prevention Week, showing the children our trucks and equipment and discussing fire safety to an attentive audience.

On Sunday, October 26, we had an all-day training session at a live burn, burning down a house that had been partially destroyed by fire several years ago. It provided interior attack training for many of our newer and junior firefighters who had not experienced interior attack up close and personal. The training was appreciated by one and all. Our Engine One died at the end of the day and had to be ignominiously towed home. Fortunately, repairs were made quickly and, even more fortunately, KME has informed us that we might expect delivery of a new Engine One as early as December of this year.

And now for the good news! After three years of hard work by Dave Cote, Gary Singley, their wives, and others, writing and refining FEMA Fire assistance grant applications, we were notified in late October that the Heath Fire Department had been awarded \$225,000 to purchase a new truck. The Town will have to match this with its own share of \$25,000. Folks, this is a deal that's too good to pass up! For this money we'll get a new 1500-gallon tanker that will even have brakes, and we'll have two brand-new trucks within a year for the price of one. Needless to say, we are pretty excited by all of this and we hope you're all, too. Obviously, there will have to be a town meeting vote to appropriate our share, so we hope you turn out for it and show your support for the Heath Fire Department.

Just a reminder - if you didn't change your smoke detector batteries when you turned your clock back, do it NOW! Make sure your chimney is clean, and dispose of ashes carefully. Put all fire ash in metal containers only and be sure they're cold before you dump them.

Wishing everyone a safe winter.

~ Richards Steinbock



Heath Emergency Services News

The following calls were answered since the last issue of the *Herald*:

09/10/03 - Papoose Lake Drive - Medical
 09/13/03 - Deer Run Lane - Medical
 10/01/03 - Rowe Rd. - Medical
 10/08/03 - Rt. 8A North - Medical
 10/09/03 - West Main St. - Medical
 10/14/03 - Number Nine Rd. - Medical
 10/15/03 - Rt. 8A North - Medical
 10/16/03 - Rt. 8A North - Medical
 10/26/03 - Burrington Rd. - Medical
 11/06/03 - A.L. Stetson Rd.-Tractor Accident
 11/09/03 - Sumner Stetson Rd. - Medical

We hope all of you have a Happy and Safe Holiday Season.

~ Timothy Lively, EMT

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Happy Holidays



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 For us all and for
 Our world in 2004*

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