



HEATH HERALD

Heath's First Newspaper

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25th Anniversary Issue



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HEATH'S FIRST NEWSPAPER 35¢

TENTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



VOL. 1 NO. 1 APRIL 1979

HEATH HERALD

NEWS AND VIEWS

25¢

HEATH'S FIRST NEWSPAPER!

By Harriet Read

Spring is here. Read any newspaper or listen to any broadcast and you will become aware of all the many good things that happen in the spring except for this one, the arrival of the first edition of the Heath Herald. This is very good news!

Some time ago the idea of a newspaper for Heath began to take root. There are advantages to having topics of local interest presented from one source and now, with our quiet little town of yesteryear experiencing many changes due to influences beyond its boundaries, these advantages are even more apparent. A group of enthusiastic "Heathens" got together early in March to discuss the philosophy of the paper, its title, and the technicalities of getting the first issue published.

The Heath Herald will be a non-partisan newspaper written by and for the people of Heath. It will be informative and inspirational only if the news of events reaches the paper. You may write directly to the Heath Herald, P.O. Box 54, Heath, MA.

Let's make it a go, with all of us supporting Heath's very first newspaper by contributing to future issues and, of course, by subscribing to it. Here's to a Successful Heath Herald!

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

On Thursday, April 19 at 8 PM, a Special Town Meeting will be held to vote on an appropriation of \$8000 to cover additional finishing work on Sawyer Hall not covered in the original specifications. Of this amount, \$5000 is to be transferred from Revenue Sharing and \$3000 is to be raised by taxation.

Another article will call for \$7500 from Revenue Sharing to be used for the purchase of a wood chipper machine.

SAWYER HALL UPDATE

By Anne Henderson

Work on Sawyer Hall is progressing and should be completed soon, according to the Selectmen. Structural renovations are being handled by Whiteman Bros. of Colrain. A new plumbing and heating system has been installed by Don Ward of Buckland, and the building has been rewired by Charles York of Shelburne.

Some unexpected problems were encountered early in the renovation. Poor quality foundation work had to be corrected before upstairs remodeling could begin. Some crumbling basement walls and an ill fitting boiler room door were repaired, and a plastic drainage pipe was replaced by a cast iron one as required by the building code.

Upstairs the contractors found more problems as they began the remodeling work. A steel I-beam has to be installed in the back wall of the library to replace a wooden one which has sagged. Shelving in the old kitchenette was found to be supporting the floor upstairs and a new beam will be installed there also. A small leak in the roof was also repaired.

The new Sawyer Hall will be quite a change from the old building. Insulation has been blown into the walls. A baseboard heating system has replaced the old furnace and space heaters. Windows have been repaired. A wheel chair ramp and new entryway have been created.

Inside, the building will be brighter and more open. The first floor will provide a foyer with a public phone, the Selectmen's office, a combined Assessors'/Town Clerk's office, new rest rooms, a small storage closet, and the enlarged library. On the second floor, there will be two finished rooms and a large unfinished hall. One of the finished rooms has been designated as a library research center. The function of the other two rooms will be decided by future town needs.

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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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Church News

By Hilma Sumner, Minister

As I write this I can look out my window and see the ground blanketed in the white of a recent snowfall and notice the temperature dipping to 10 degrees. It is an exercise in faith for Heathans to hold to our belief that the spring season is indeed coming. We are confident that soon the snow will melt for the last time and warmer weather will arrive but, once again, we are left to wonder when.

With the springtime, the church begins preparing for its Lenten services. On Thursday, April 8, at 7:00 p.m., there will be a service in remembrance of the Last Supper. Easter Sunday, April 11, will begin with a sunrise service at 6:00 a.m. Ruth Corey has invited everyone to her home on Schoolhouse Road for the service and potluck breakfast which will follow. The 10:00 a.m. worship service at the church will include special music in the celebration of the risen Lord. Everyone is welcome to be a part of our services at Easter or any other time.

THE HEATH HERALD CELEBRATES



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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ON
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CARROLL STOWE'S
"THE WAY IT IS IN THE COUNTRY"
(Selections from 25 years of the *Heath Herald*)

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The Way We Lived Then

The older we get, the faster time seems to fly by, as though everything in our lives has been recorded on movie film and screened by a progressively accelerating projector. Thus, it almost seems like a year or two ago that we bought our place in North Heath from Mildred Crowningshield, although this took place on a March day in 1970. I will never forget the circumstances that led to the sale. My two boys and I, along with Bill Pratt, the agent, had trudged up the hill and through hip-deep snow; when we emerged from the woods, I saw an ancient but run-down house sitting on a hilltop from which one had a view all the way to the hills above Pelham, 25 miles away. That minute, I knew that we just had to have this place. Down the hill and in the Crowningshield's sugar house, the old, apple-cheeked lady emerged from a cloud of steam. I was the first potential buyer who had asked about the property who was definitely not a hippie (there were still such persons in the Heath Commune, which was soon to break up). We hit it off right away, and the deal was finalized in a few days. That summer, we became adopted Heathans.

Being an archaeologist by profession, I immediately became interested in Heath's considerable past - Fort Shirley and the French and Indian Wars of the mid-18th century; Heath's late 18th and early 19th century inhabitants; and the old-time families still very much in evidence. As we planted our vegetable and flower gardens, we were constantly turning up pottery fragments and other artifacts from earlier times before this farm had become part of the Crowningshields' dairy operations. There was obviously a lot of history in this town.

One day during that first summer, Ed Calver came over and persuaded Sophie and me to join the Heath Historical Society. In those times, this was virtually a one-man show run by Ed, with a dramatically lamp-lit annual meeting in the Old Town House. I'm also an anthropologist, and it quickly became apparent to me how this particular tribe (i.e. the Heathans) was organized. Firstly, with a few exceptions like the Dickinsons and Edith Gleason, the Historical Society was the preserve of the Summer People. The local dairy farmers (of whom there were then 14, now dwindled to one) belonged to the Grange, now unfortunately defunct, and to the Heath Agricultural Society while their wives ran the Ladies Aid. Essentially these - the farmers and the summer folks -- made up the two moieties (halves) of the tribe. The one time the whole enterprise drew together was the annual Heath Fair, a mightily successful joint effort.

By the summer of 1974 I had convinced the HHS to let me direct a scientific excavation of the mid 18th century site of Fort Shirley, with a crew which included Yale archaeology students along with local talent like Bill Thane. My field director was Jack Kloppenburg, then a Yale senior but now Professor of Rural Sociology at the University of Wisconsin. Our project not only uncovered all sorts of military artifacts, now housed in the Center Schoolhouse, but also a wealth of archival documents on the officers and men of the forts.

And speaking of archives, title searches into the earliest ownership history of our hilltop farm introduced me into the world of early 19th century Heath, long before the introduction of refrigerated trucks transformed mixed farming into dairy farming.

When the *Heath Herald* was founded in 1979, one of my earliest historical essays for it was the result of digging into that fascinating publication, the *Vital Records of Heath Massachusetts*. Here were records of birth, marriages, and deaths from the time of Heath's founding through the Civil War period, along with changing population figures. One of my findings was the result of simple arithmetic: by subtracting the birth dates of first children from the marriage dates of their parents, it was obvious that a great many young women of those days had gone to the altar "in an interesting condition," a state of affairs that historians now know was always typical of early New England.

It was a pleasure writing such essays for the paper, well removed from the jargon so necessary to academic discourse. My wife Sophie also enjoyed writing up her deep interest in foodways, as an adjunct to her devotion to supervising the exhibits hall of the Heath Fair, an annual task that she deeply loved and carried out for 16 years (along with Alli Thane-Stetson). She and I, and our children when they were on vacation, traveled widely together in all parts of the world, and we had fun writing these up for the paper - such as our 1993 trip to war-torn Cambodia, during which we found ourselves only ten miles from a combat zone, within the sound of mortar shells and machine guns.

Heath has changed much since those early days, but in important respects has stayed the same. The Grange has gone and dairy farming is almost extinct. Few Heathans still have working sugar houses. Many well-loved people from those days are no longer with us, among others Librarian Edith Gleason, Postmistress Esther Dickinson, the Reverend Bill Wolf, Ed Calver, Harriet Read (who had much to do with the founding of the paper), the senior Peterses of "Heath's Only Store." Yet the Ladies Aid flourishes, as does the Library and the wonderful Heath Fair. And so does the *Heath Herald* - long may it live!

~ Michael Coe

IN MEMORIAM

**HONORING FOUNDERS, FORMER STAFF MEMBERS,
AND FREQUENT CONTRIBUTORS, NO LONGER WITH
US, FOR ALL THAT THEY DID TO ENSURE THE
HERALD'S SUCCESS.**

**MIKE BAKALAR
ED CALVER
SOPHIE COE
ESTHER DICKINSON
EDITH GLEASON
ALICE KINSMAN
PAUL LIVELY
CATHERINE (NICHOLS) HEYL
HELEN NICHOLS
MICHAEL PETERS
HARRIET AND JOHN READ
CAROLINE SMITH
THE REVEREND WILLIAM WOLF**



Wild Ramblings

Frozen But Not Forgotten

By Bill Lattrell

Not long ago, on a warm February afternoon, I found myself sitting on a fallen log deep in the woods after having spent the morning searching for animal tracks, a form of entertainment that can keep me busy for hours. I got a fairly late start, about 9 a.m. on this cold morning. Not unlike many February days the afternoon wind shifted to the south and a warm breeze started to blow in. By about one-thirty the temperature was in the low forties. I was working up a sweat climbing up this hill and descending down the next hill in search of wildlife signs where none could be found due to the hard frozen snow cover. As I sat there resting I found myself appreciating the silence of the winter woods. The quiet tells a story of nature at rest.

To the east, not too far off in the distance, I started to hear a chirping sound. At first I thought it was some sort of bird, but I couldn't place the call. I stood up and walked about 100 feet towards the direction of the sound when I heard, again, the same low-tone chirping. Not too far in the distance I could see an area of melted ice near the edge of a shallow vernal pool. There was little doubt in my mind that the unfrozen area was spring fed from groundwater with a temperature well above 32 degrees. The chirping was not a bird at all, but the solo chorusing of a confused wood frog thinking spring had arrived.

There is little question that a chorusing wood frog would seem out of place to almost anyone in this cold, mostly frozen environment. As I puzzled about this it all began to make sense to me.

Wood Frogs are unique creatures, even for the amphibian world. Many amphibians bury themselves in the dirt or mud as the first hard frosts arrive. As the frost goes deeper into ground, most of these creatures sense the cold and dig themselves in a little bit deeper to avoid temperatures that will remain consistently below freezing. By the middle of winter most of these amphibians (and many reptiles) find themselves a few feet into the ground in a deep sleep known to most of us as hibernation. But there are a few amphibians like the wood frog and spring peeper that have developed special mechanisms to deal with the cold weather.

The wood frog will bury itself under a thin layer of the forest floor or leaves shed from nearby hardwoods as winter approaches. At the first sign of a hard frost this frog's skin will sense freezing and relay a message that releases adrenaline into the cardiovascular system of the frog. The adrenaline activates enzymes in the liver that convert glycogen to glucose. The living cells of the frog become consumed with glucose. On the inside of the cells the glucose is converted to glycerol, an alcohol-like substance that acts as antifreeze. On the outside of the cells glucose and special proteins osmotically remove water from the living cell wall. In this way the voids between

the cells freeze but not the actual living cells. The end result is that no important tissue is damaged by the frost within the frog's body. This frozen state, in combination with the hibernating frog's very slow metabolism and respiration, allow the frog to survive on what limited energy reserves it has stored for the duration of the winter.

Even a slight change in its overall environmental temperature can unfreeze the frog and bring it back to life. On this day the combination of the ice thaw near the spring feeding the vernal pool and the sudden spring-like temperatures created the perfect situation for the wood frog to come back to life. No doubt it was refrozen back into a state of suspended animation by nightfall.

Modern science has taken note of the wood frogs' unique ability. Dr. Kenneth Storey of Carleton University and Dr. Boris Rubinsky of the University of California, Berkeley have studied the freezing and osmotic process in wood frogs to help cryopreserve living organs, a process that could prove to be very helpful in preserving donor organs for longer periods of time than is now possible. Their research has revealed that cellular dehydration is the key factor that will determine whether or not cells can survive this freezing process. Successful pilot programs involving rat organs show great hope for the successful long-term storage of human organs in the near future.

Later that afternoon, as the sun hung low in the southwestern sky and an evening chill began to settle in, I headed back through the woods to a warm place that I call home. On the way, as the dark began to obscure the shadows of the naked winter trees, I remembered something that Loren Eiseley, the well known naturalist, anthropologist and writer once observed. He wrote that man has not yet invented a single thing; he has merely discovered what already occurs in the natural world.

As I wandered towards home through those dark woods I realized that there is no shame in Eiseley's observation for us humans, rather it gives us a reason to completely commit ourselves to the preservation and understanding of the natural world.

USA Patriot Act Resolution

On March 22, a group of concerned citizens met at the Heath School to discuss a resolution, that had been previously drawn up by committee, concerning the USA Patriot Act.

This resolution, in final form to be an article on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, asks the Selectboard, on behalf of the Town of Heath, to bring pressure on our elected representatives in Washington to work for the repeal of the Act which, it is strongly felt, puts our constitutionally-guaranteed civil rights in jeopardy.

An informational meeting will be held on April 26 at 7:00 p.m. at the Charlemont Inn at which Bill Newman, a Northampton attorney and an authority on the USA Patriot Act, will speak and answer questions.

All Heath citizens are encouraged to attend this meeting as well as the Annual Town Meeting on May 8 to support this resolution.

Selectboard's Report

The Selectboard meets every other Tuesday night at 7:00 p.m. and more frequently as needed in Sawyer Hall.

Business - Employee evaluations and budget hearings have occupied much of the Board's time for the last few weeks. Joint meetings with the Finance Committee have been held to work on the FY05 Budget and to clean up the FY04 accounts. Warrant articles for the next Annual Town Meeting are also being considered. The Board will be looking into applying for a FY05 CDBG block grant for upgrading roads or other infrastructure improvements if they are found to be eligible.

Community Hall - Bids have been received for the renovations to the Community Hall. The Board will award the contract when the architect and Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority have completed their reviews of the bids and have made a recommendation. A contract award should be made by the end of March.

New Fire Truck Arrives - The Fire Department has taken delivery of the new fire engine that was approved at the last Annual Town Meeting. This engine will replace the aging and mechanically-troubled main attack vehicle, Engine #1. The Fire Department is also developing specifications for a new truck that will be provided by their successful grant application. An invitation for bids will go out soon.

Yankee Atomic Trucking Campaign - Trucking through Heath has been suspended for the last few weeks. Traffic was being routed through Vermont until an accident occurring on March 1 in Rowe led to a suspension of all trucking pending the completion of an investigation into the incident.

Transfer Station Hours - A survey has been conducted to determine the preferred hours for the transfer station operation. The results indicate a preference for Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Wednesday afternoons from 1:00 to 5 p.m. These hours will be in effect all year-round beginning July 1. Monday morning hours will be discontinued. Monday hours were originally offered for a local trash hauling service that is no longer in business. The Town has been working with the Solid Waste District to get separate containers for recyclable paper and for bottles and cans so that we may maximize loads for shipping and reduce the transportation costs.

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 DeVriese
Sheila Litchfield

Town Clerk News

Primary Results and Reflections

On March 2, at the Presidential Primary, 124 voters turned out to cast ballots for their choice of candidates. This was 25 percent of the 491 people who are registered to vote in town. Of that total, 114 cast ballots in the Democratic Party, eight voted Republican, while two cast Green Rainbow Party ballots. Voting took place at the elementary school, which was a first for our town.

The news media was predicting a low turnout in Massachusetts and so it was. It is unfortunate that many Americans seem to allow the media to influence the course of action they will follow in their voting habits. In some elections, people are encouraged to vote and there is always a situation recalled about how one voted changed the outcome of a particular election.

But at other times, such as this past March 2, the news predictions act as a discouragement to exercising our freedom to vote. I am one Town Clerk who cannot help but wonder what the final tallies would be, not only of how many people voted, but also who was elected, if all the primaries were held on the same day and without the media bias.

Annual Town Election and Town Meeting

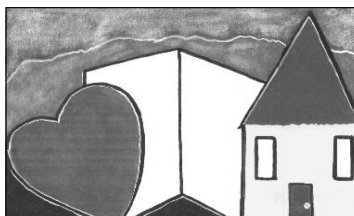
The annual town election will be held on **Friday, May 7**, from 12 noon to 7:00 p.m. Please watch for future announcements as to the voting location. Offices and length of terms that will appear on the ballot will be as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| * Selectman, 3 years | * Library Trustee, 3 years |
| * Assessor, 3 years | * Planning Board, 5 years |
| * Finance Committee, 3 years | * Dog Officer, 1 year |
| * School Committee, 3 years | * Constable, 1 year, 2 positions. |

Of these, nomination papers have been filed by: Tom Lively for Selectman, Mike Chrisman for School Committee, Diane Grinnell for Planning Board, Charles Kaempfer and Robert Tanner for Constable. Any other registered voters who wish to run for one of these offices must campaign as a write-in candidate.

Following the election will be the Annual Town Meeting on **Saturday, May 8**. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. at the elementary school.

~ Hilma Sumner



FHSL CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

The Friends of the Heath School Library will serve their third annual Continental Breakfast before and during the Annual Town Meeting on May 8 at the Heath Elementary School.

Coffee, tea, orange juice, deviled eggs, and sweet things will be available beginning at 8:30 a.m.

Join us for breakfast and support the Heath School Library.

Don't forget to vote!



Library Lines

Looking for Answers??



By Charlene Churchill

Where is the largest freshwater lake in the world? What movie did Katharine Hepburn star in where her character was a librarian? Who is the leader of Pakistan? Why does hair turn gray? When was George H. W. Bush born? Did you ever wonder any of these things? or anything similar? or anything dissimilar? Could you find the answer? If not, call, e-mail, or come in to the library and we will find the answer for you.

One of the many services provided by our library is answering reference questions, such as those listed. If we don't have the answer at our fingertips in a book or database, we can call the Western Massachusetts Regional Reference Center at the Springfield City Library and they will research the question and provide the answer at no cost to you. So please don't let that nagging question keep you from sleeping at night: contact us and let us find the answer.

We are having preschool story hours at the library every week until mid-June. Alli Thane-Stetson is reading to the children, and helping them with a craft project. Everyone has a snack and a chance to check out a book. Story hours are held on Fridays at 10 a.m. and all preschoolers are invited to attend. The Franklin County Family Network provides funding for these programs.

We have recently purchased some new audiobooks on cassette and CD. We would like to thank the Heath Council on Aging for providing a grant for this and the Friends of the Heath Public Library for donating matching funds for these purchases.

Some of the new audio titles are:

On cassette: *Blow Fly* by Patricia Cornwell, *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster, *Mirror Lake* by Thomas Christopher Greene, *Three Junes* by Julia Glass, *Paradise Alley* by Kevin Baker, *The Black Tower* by P. D. James, and *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel.

On CD: *The Bear in the Attic* by Patrick F. McManus, *Cry, the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton, *A Room With a View* by E. M. Forster, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom, *Our Lady of the Forest* by David Guterson, and *Babes in the Wood* by Ruth Rendell.



Green Thoughts

by

ELSA BAKALAR

We are living in anxious and uncertain times. If past experience is anything to go on that's when folks set even greater store by their homes and, by extension, their gardens. The aim may be a jungle of every color and shape or an orderly arrangement of rows of vegetables - even, sometimes, a ravishing combination of both, but either may help the gardener feel, in some degree, in charge of his/her life. Well, so much for the philosophy of why we garden.

It's April, after all. Comes one bright, sunny day, and the very air smells of promise. Steady on! (My English family's pet cautionary phrase) I don't want to be a spoil-sport, but I'm obliged to say (possibly for the hundredth time in print)...DO NOT tramp about on wet, heavy soil. Give it time to drain. We're supposed to be gardening, not brick-making.

DO use the waiting time for more contemplative activity, such as reading, looking, planning. There won't be much time for that once things get growing.

You may have received seeds already from mail-order houses. (If so, keep them cold and dry) Local seed racks offer

enormous choices.

DO read instructions on the packet. If annuals, how long from seed to flowers? Biennials, such as sweet william, painted daisy, Canterbury bells, will be sturdy little plants by fall. No flowers in their first summer but plants live through that winter to make flowers early next summer, and are so welcome while the rest of the garden is waking up.

DO consider seeding some perennials. You have a little more time to think about this. End of summer- late August, September, early October are all good months, as long as you water the seedlings in very dry weather. My favorite garden perennials in Heath have always been delphinium, Shasta daisy, phlox (the stately, tall kind), lupin, aconitum. Now many of these will bloom for me in Ashfield, where I am now a year-round resident, no longer dashing to and fro between Heath and Ashfield.

I think with great pleasure of the delightful family who bought the summer place in Heath, and feel so happy that they will be able to see that big garden unfold to beauty, month by month. I shall be paying full attention to the Ashfield garden. It will take a great deal of work, and in that I rejoice. I hope to write notes for gardeners for both our town papers, and I send greetings to gardeners everywhere.

Note: It's not too soon to be thinking of Heath Fair. Entries were a little sparse last year, and yet I overheard many comments from valley visitors - one who said "those hilltown gardeners; I don't know how they do it!" (This is the year to show them).



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL

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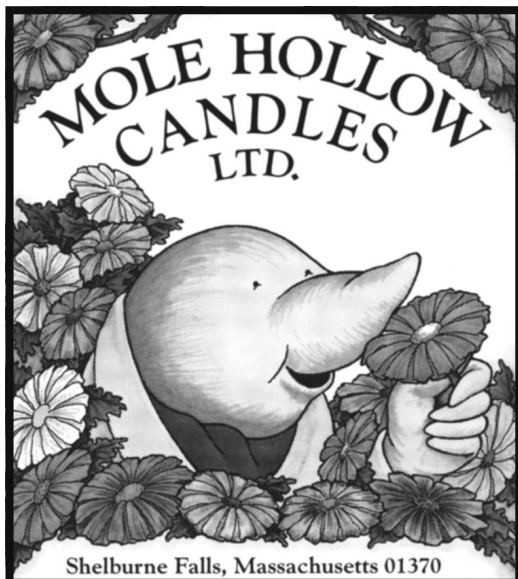
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Rays of Interest

Fishing with Bears

By Raymond Pettengill

Shortly after getting out of the Navy, my wife and I and newborn son were living with her folks in Maine. My wife's father's name was Linwood and she had a brother named Bill who lived close by. One of the things you can do in Maine most of the time is fish. Linwood and Bill had a favorite fishing spot over in Stratton, Maine, and now being part of the family, they invited me to go along with them on a fishing trip.

On getting to Stratton we drove down a narrow dirt road through the woods for a mile or two until we came to a little side road which led us to a long open meadow that had a brook meandering through it. (As it was their favorite spot I cannot tell you exactly how to get there) The brook was only about eight to ten feet wide but very deep with undercut banks where the fish like to hide. Because the brook was so narrow we decided to split up so Bill started fishing up the brook and Linwood and I started fishing down it. As fishing was part of getting food for the table back then, we were using worms for bait and the fish were biting real good. Because of this we were able to snail a lot of fish onto the bank in a short time. A lot of them were ten to eleven inches long.

We did not have our game law book with us and were guessing what the limit was. We were about ready to call it quits when Linwood kind of offhand-like says, "Ray, take a look at what's coming up the brook." What was coming up the brook, fortunately on the other side from us, was a full grown black bear. We figured it must be a she bear with cubs close by from the way she was acting. She was lumbering along swaying from side to side grunting and grumbling as she came by on the other side of the brook no more than 50 feet away from us. I suspected she could smell our fish and was a little put out that we were catching all her fish. As she did not seem to pay any attention to us we felt it was best not to run, but as soon as she was a good distance up the brook we decided it was a good time to go back to the truck and wait for Bill.

By now it was starting to get dark and we were fretting about Bill not showing up. We had the truck lights on and kept tooting the horn off and on to let him know how to get back. We really did not want to go up the brook looking for him. After about a half-hour wait Linwood drove the truck back up the wood road to another opening next to the brook, and we tooted the horn and yelled for Bill there. It was not too long before Bill did come staggering out of the woods looking the worse for wear. His clothes were torn in places, and his face and hands were scratched up pretty bad. At first we suspected he had had a run-in with the mother bear. Bill was madder than a wet hen and started to yell at us. After we got him calmed down a little and could understand what he was saying it seems that he had heard the mother bear on the other side of the brook from him and thought it was Linwood and me talking to each other. He told us that he called to us

and started to try and catch up with us but the closer he got to us the faster we were moving away from him. The brush and blackberry bushes were so thick he was tearing his clothes and scratching his face scrambling to catch up to what he thought was us. Finally he gave up and started back down the brook. By the time he heard the truck horn he was just about beat and very angry that we had pulled such a trick on him. After we told him about our encounter with the mother bear earlier and told him that it must have been her that he was chasing up the brook he turned a little pale. The next day after eating the delicious fish Bill forgave the bear for being disgruntled with us for being in her favorite fishing spot.

Hitching Post

iBook aside, dormant and asleep, quiet listening occurs in the windy sun. Long spring grass, before its first cut of the season flickers, is bent by rapid foot traffic. Birds swoop across the heavily shadowed maple tree along the road and a newly planted row of electric yellow forsythia is taking hold. The plants almost catch up to the banana yellow Dodge pickup situated across the road; the plants probably move more than the truck that has rusted quietly for five years. A brief sighting of a red and white woodpecker train the line of sight through the lilacs and across to Burnt Hill. The blueberry fields have been burnt on their crowns and eastern slopes this year.

Distraction is the norm. Wild creatures and human creatures are engaged in accelerated patterns of motion. I give up, wander to the daylily beds and dig stiffened winter fingers under the tangled roots of the plentiful weeds.

Further disruptions result in a plant run to the folks' house on this Sunday, one of their last days before the closing on their house. The Pez candy-scented irises rescued by my husband from a house he'd torn down, lungwort, a Rose of Sharon grown from seed, a blueberry bush, and a high bush cranberry were in motion to their new home three miles across town.

Digging in the earth above the roadside, daylily and iris bed netted, within seconds, stone. Not a surprise, but it turns out, not your average glacial erratic or other local immovable rock. Two crowbars and a few minutes later we'd unearthed a four-foot high hitching post. The stone had lain unnoticed under maybe six inches of soil. Sod had grown round it in a packed mass of threadlike, white grass root hairs. It pulled away smoothly in the hands of two ecstatic gardeners.

My husband's sense is that it was not used in that spot, but had been laid on the ground and forgotten. This could have happened easily enough, especially if a family had to move away without time to clean up their homestead before passing it on to the next person.

The stone is silver-flecked and solid in place. The repositioning brings it back into the light and is accompanied by the pat pata pata pat pat of the woodpecker drilling in one of the maples. The hitching post holes, drilled holes that tunnel through the stone, are packed solid masses of grass roots. The stone standing before me reminds me of home; left behind in the gardens at my in-laws' house are a number of tiny standing stones. Behind the hitching post stands the pruned but still elegant Rose of Sharon surrounded by a sea of primula, iris, and lungwort.

("Hitching Post" continued on page 19)

Heath Business Directory

Bald Mountain Pottery
625-8110

The Benson Place
Blueberries & Applesauce
337-5340

Fred Burrington
Artist
337-4302

Coursey Design
Interior architecture & design
337-4751

D.C. Builders
Branch Hill Road
337-4705

Robert Delisle
Electrician
337-5716

Russell E. Donelson
Design/Construction/Cabinetry
337-4460

Jerry Ferguson
Handyman - Lic. Electrician
337-4317

Earl M. Gleason
Fire Equipment
337-4948

Heath Brook Studio
Glass and Baskets
337-5736

L & S Enterprises
Leisure Furniture Maker
337-5505

Patricia Lentz
Indigo Glassworks
337-5375
Maple Ledge Farm
Maple Syrup Year Round
337-4705

John Mooney
Custom Remodeling
337-8344

Wanda Mooney
Realtor
337-8344

Alan Nichols
Furniture Maker
337-6665

C. Richards Steinbock
Graphic Design
337-4746

Tripp's Blueberries
Taylor Brook Road
337-4964

Paul Turnbull
Janice Boudreau
Commercial/Wedding Photographers
337-4033

Bonnie Wodin
Custom Gardens & Landscapes
337-5529

Support Your Local Businesses

If you would like more information about the Heath Enterprise Council, please call Alicia Tripp at 337-4964

CARLISLE WALLCOVERING
PAPERHANGING & INTERIOR PAINTING
MICHAEL CARLISLE 413-625-9733

FRANKLIN-WARE 27 Bridge Street
Shelburne Falls
625-6470
A Division of **RICE**

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Journeyman Electrician
Mass. License #E22622 • Vermont License #J1245
20A Eight A South • Charlemont, MA 01339
(413) 337-4845

A. L. Nichols Furniture
al.nichols.com
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Do your Sleeping Bags, Quilts, Comforters,
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Village Coin-Op Laundry
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Dave Farrington 38 Years of Experience
Jacksonville, VT
802-368-7456
J.W. AUTO
Auto and Light Truck Repair
Elvis Presley Blvd., Rt. 100 S., 1/2 mile from center
ASE Certified Master Mechanic
Air Conditioning, Service Engine Lights, Auto Transmission



To help us celebrate 25 years of the *Heath Herald*, we asked the founders, former editors and staff members to give us their recollections of the early days.

Today's *Herald* staff thanks these good folk and the many columnists and contributors for their vision

and hard work to get the paper started and to continue it, sometimes through difficult times.

These pages form what is an historical document from the year 1979 of our town and its people.

VOLUME I, NUMBER I, APRIL 1979

Editorial Staff- Pegge Howland

Caroline Smith

Alli Thane

Advertising - Mike Bakalar

Art - Harriet Read

Business - John Read

Circulation - Terry Pettengill

HEATH'S FIRST NEWSPAPER

By Harriet Read

Spring is here. Read any newspaper or listen to any broadcast and you will be aware of all the many good things that happen in the spring except for this one, the arrival of the first edition of the *Heath Herald*. This is very good news!

Some time ago the idea of a newspaper began to take root. There are advantages to having topics of local interest presented from one source and now, with our quiet little town of yesteryear experiencing many changes due to influences beyond its boundaries, these advantages are even more apparent. A group of enthusiastic "Heathans" got together early in March to discuss the philosophy of the paper, its title, and the technicalities of getting a first issue published.

The *Heath Herald* will be a non-partisan newspaper written by and for the people of Heath. It will be informative and inspirational only if the news of events reaches the paper. You may write directly to the *Heath Herald*, P.O. Box 54, Heath, MA.

Let's make it a go, with all of us supporting Heath's very first newspaper by contributions to future issues and, of course, by subscribing to it. Here's to a successful *Heath Herald*!

A Tribute to Harriet Carpenter Read

Twenty-five years ago there came to be "a non-partisan newspaper by and for the people of Heath." That quote is from an article written by founder Harriet Carpenter Read for the first issue of the *Heath Herald*.

Harriet's ties to Heath were deep. Her parents were Jessie and Frank Carpenter. Frank was born in the Heath Center house that is now the home of David and Margaret Howland. (The Howlands were close friends of the Reads and were also among the founders of the paper.) That house, 13 East Main Street, was once owned by Flora and Mary Abby White as was the house to the east, number 27, originally known as "Nims Hill," and for some unknown reason changed by the White sisters to Plover Hill. In 1932 the sisters sold Plover Hill to Harriet's parents, and she inherited it in 1962. Bob and I have made it our home since 1990. Harriet told us that when she was a child, she and her parents lived in the house next door, now owned by Edith Overly, and when she often cut across the sisters' properties to get to the town center, they would scold her.

Bob and I enjoyed our brief friendship with Harriet, who died in 1994. We did not have the pleasure of knowing John, but Harriet spoke of their shared feelings for Heath and urged us to "get involved." We were deeply touched when, shortly after her death, we received a call from her lawyer and learned that she had left her photograph albums of Plover Hill to us. From these photographs we not only gained more history of the property but saw the images of a strikingly handsome man, always referred to by Harriet as "my Johnny." Harriet was herself as Chuck Kades once remarked "quite a looker." It is clear to us that the Reads were devoted to each other and to enjoying life together. They were also artistic, warm and gracious, and liked to give parties. Harriet was, to quote Alli Thane-Stetson, "a lot of fun, a very generous person."

Alli recalled that it was Marisa Housner who led the Heath Fair parade as the herald in a green and white outfit designed by Harriet, complete with an ostrich feather on the hat. Harriet designed the herald of the newspaper's masthead and created the drawings and artistic embellishments throughout the newspaper.

There is a photograph taken of the front meadow of Plover Hill in October of 1964 with the following notation in Harriet's lovely handwriting, "Johnny hewed our flagpole from a tree on the property. Howlands helped us raise it. Flag at half mast for death of President Eisenhower." The iris, phlox and peonies she planted at Plover Hill remind us of the deep affection she had for this place. We have planted a lovely tree here in our front meadow and placed a stone below it which reads: *In memory of Harriet C. Read who loved Plover Hill.*

The tree and stone are surrounded by plantings of spring bulbs and Johnny-jump-ups - for her Johnny.

~ Del Viarengo



My Love Affair with the Heath Herald

It is with great delight that I recall my ten or so years as Editor of the *Heath Herald*. It was indeed an honor to serve our community and provide local news, politics, columns and even occasional tidbits of gossip to the residents and summer people of Heath.

Notable contributors during my days with the *Herald* included Terry Pettengill, Alice Kinsman, Arlene Markert, Dave Howland, Laurie Wheeler Burrington, Deborah Phillips, Edith Royer, Elsa Bakalar, Michael Coe, Bill Lattrell, Carroll Stowe, Amy Barry, Eileen Tougas, Jack Cable, Alastair Maitland, Pat Leuchtman, and others. Mainstays of the paper were such standard columns as "Library Lines," "Milestones," town department reports, "People in the News," church and school news.

In the early days Newland and Caroline Smith hosted our staff meetings, serving delicious beverages and mouth-watering snacks and updating us with community news. It was a treat to sit in front of the roaring fire in the winter or on their porch in the summer and discuss profound politics or the discovery of a newborn fawn in the field. Later meetings were held at other people's homes and the library.

The subject of what to place on the front page was always a major topic of conversation! If anything was controversial, that was it! At our bi-monthly meetings we discussed current topics and noteworthy events before making the final decision. Sometimes we just gave front page billing to a particular column or town department. Heath graduates always received special attention, and we included photographs whenever possible of the elementary and secondary school children. The December issue always featured a full page photograph or drawing with season's greetings embedded on the cover, in red or green when we could afford it! My favorite cover was the December 1996 issue that featured a painting of Heath Center by local artist Winky Wall. That painting was a gift from my uncle to my aunt, Eleanor Shippee.

During the course of my tenure I instituted a few changes; one in particular was the formalization of bi-monthly columns written by and about local Heathans. The content ran the gamut from Michael Coe's worldly observations and travels to the beloved stories of farm equipment and backyard saunterings by Carroll Stowe. Bill Lattrell's "Wild Ramblings" was always a favorite column as was Pat Leuchtman's "Connections" which introduced new townspeople to the community.

It was not all easy work. Funding was sometimes a concern. There were many times when the advertisements and sales of the newspaper barely covered the cost of printing and mailing it. For years and years Dave Howland drove to North Adams to drop off the original copy and then drove back a few days later to pick up the finished product. The Adams Specialty & Printing Company gave us high quality at a fair price. We also had technical glitches, initially transferring the process from Newland's typewriter to his computer and then just simply making sure someone had a quality printer. We sure went through lots of toner cartridges! We solicited photographs but more often than not we attended events and took our own photographs, paying for the film and processing ourselves. Then there was the ubiquitous midnight rendezvous for last minute printing and editing. Late articles were the bane of

my existence! Arlene Markert and I spent many late nights and long hours at the computer, tiptoeing to the upstairs office through my daughter's bedroom while she slept, where we printed draft after draft of the new issue!

Pegge Howland masterfully created each edition of the paper with a formal layout of all the pages on her dining room table, and after picking up the printed copies, her husband Dave delivered them to Terry Pettengill and then to Deborah Phillips. From there a team of people, mostly family members, went into action, folding and stapling the paper. Address labels were added and the newspaper was mailed. That was no easy task!

It was with great pride that I served as editor of this wonderful paper. The credit for its longevity goes to today's wonderful volunteer staff. Of all the local newspapers in our nine town area, the *Heath Herald* is one of the oldest and most respected. And our contributors are some of the finest writers in the country! I will always cherish my memories of working on the *Heath Herald* and the many friends I made in the course of publishing it. And now I just look forward to reading each new issue with the assurance that the paper is in good hands. Many, many thanks to the current staff for their continued dedication and devotion!

~ Susan B. Silvester, Former Editor



Marisa Housner as *Heath Herald*

The Heath Herald: 25 Years and Going Strong!

Twenty-five years! I can hardly believe it. I didn't think it would last a year. It all started in 1979. There had been some informal talk around town, over cocktails at the Reads' and at the Smiths', that Heath had no way to communicate official town reports and general town news to its citizens. Remember this was before the *West County News* came on the scene. Finally a group of us got together at our yellow house in Heath Center (called by Caroline Smith, I think) and we began to discuss how to produce the *Heath* newspaper.

(*"The Heath Herald:"* continued on page 12)

(“The Heath Herald:” continued from page 11)

Gathered around the fireplace that evening in the dead of winter were Caroline and Newland Smith, Alli Thane, Mike Bakalar, Harriet and John Read, Terry Pettengill, and Pegge and Dave Howland. First we all agreed that we had to have a newspaper. Then we picked a name. That was fairly easy since we all liked the alliteration of “*Heath Herald*.” We then developed a process for getting the paper done and delegated jobs to everyone. Pegge Howland, Caroline Smith, and Alli Thane were named to the Editorial Staff; Mike Bakalar volunteered to take care of the advertising since he had a lot of experience managing *The Good Life*. Harriet Read was our Art Director and created the *Herald* logo that still adorns the front page. John Read agreed to “take care of business” i.e. the money, and Terry Pettengill was assigned to Circulation, or the job of subscription management. We got ourselves a post office box number in Heath and a bulk mailing permit, and we were off and running!

The “process” proceeded like this. First Caroline Smith would spend days, sometimes weeks, calling people urging them to write articles and contacting town officials for their reports. Then Newland would type them up in the column format (they usually came to him in longhand, of course). Newland had a homemade computer that he built from a kit but he used it like a typewriter for the *Heath Herald*. Caroline edited along the way for grammar and spelling. She was very careful not to change the text too much, though, as she liked the “homespun” feel of the original articles.

Next, the typed articles and ads came to me. I had arranged to have some smooth, shiny sheets of cardboard printed with dim blue lines showing the outline of the pages and the columns to guide me. Now it was a matter of cut-and-paste. I cut each of the articles and ads to fit the columns and pasted them on the cardboard. In other words I was doing the “layout.” I usually started on a Sunday afternoon and often didn’t get to bed until one or two in the morning what with having to shift and juggle to get everything in. Caroline and/or Newland came over the next day to “OK” the layout. Sometimes they didn’t OK it and I had to redo some of the arrangement!

Once the cardboard sheets were done, they were passed to John Read who carted them to a print shop in Adams where they were printed by the offset process. Remember this is long before the Microsoft Publisher program was available. John went back in a few days to pick up the upwards of 200 finished copies and drove them to Terry Pettengill.

By now the *Herald* was an 8 1/2 by 11 folder of anywhere from 6 to 26 pages. Terry had to fold them in half once more (a formidable job), staple them, attach preprinted address labels that she made for every subscriber and take them to the post office in either Heath, Shelburne, or Charlemont. And, lo and behold the first issue of the *Heath Herald* appeared in your mailbox in April 1979. But as you can see it took a lot of synchronization and cooperation by a very dedicated team to accomplish this.

In later years through the miracle of modern technology I did the layout on a computer and later yet just sent the floppy disk to the print shop. It seems like a century ago! I still enjoy the *Heath Herald* and congratulate the present-day team for their efforts to keep it going and their attention to retaining its homegrown feel. Bless you all!!

~ Pegge Howland

My Heath Herald Experience

When Jane deLeeuw wrote me a note asking for some words for the 25th Anniversary issue, I gasped. Twenty-five years? I am moved that I had been a little part of something as grand as the *Heath Herald*.

Befriending Laurie Wheeler Burrington and the Heath Library were two of the best decisions I made after deciding to move here. Laurie introduced me to the *Heath Herald* and asked me to take over as editor. I did it willingly for the April/May 2000 issue.

I was very new to the community and new to the job of editing. I wanted to get to know this town and its people. What better way to get acquainted than to work on the paper! I was suddenly thrust into the midst of a very exciting and always interesting society.

I worked with an amazing group of women - Diane, Diane, Deborah, Jane, and Eileen - still on staff at this writing. Jane and Eileen, I thank you for supporting me through a rough time in my life and believing in my skills as a writer and poet. There were many nights that we “burned the midnight oil” and made the *Herald* the best paper we could.

Bob Viarengo let the *Herald* use his picture of the Community Hall for October/November 2002, and the quote “By what grace did we come to this wondrous place” on the front cover was the most personal for me. That was my last issue as editor and I’ll always think of that quote when I’m pondering how lucky I am to be here.

Congratulations on your 25 years, *Heath Herald*. Let us all hope that with the backing and community support that I know is there, we’ll celebrate the 50th together.

Until we meet again,
Lea Banks Bohrer

Newland F. Smith

Kendal at Hanover
80 Lyme Road Apt. 522, Box 39
Hanover, NH 03755-1236

March 28, 2004

Dear Jane,

Congratulations to you and the Staff of the *Heath Herald* on keeping the paper going for 25 years. I remember after 10 years, Caroline and I thought it was a long time when we stepped aside in 1989.

Ed Calver, our authoritative Heath historian, gave us one year to exist when he heard of new venture in 1979. He was basing that on his knowledge of a previous Heath publication by the Grange many years ago, intending to give news of the Town. That paper soon went out of existence.

So, if you have made it to 25, I’m sure you will be publishing in 2079! Keep up the good work.

With best wishes,

Newland Smith

Early Days

It is hard to believe that the *Heath Herald* is 25 years old. My connection with it has been somewhat uneven and, since 1990 or so, little more than the connection of a subscriber and reader. What do I remember of the "early days"? Nothing very much.

At the time of the *Heath Herald's* birth, Betty and I were still not yet year-round residents of Heath. We were spending the winter and early spring months in Paris, where I worked as a columnist for the Pittsfield *Berkshire Eagle*. It was not until my early widowhood years that I was drawn into the *Heath Herald* and that I came to experience the warmth of the friendship of Caroline and Newland Smith.

So far as I have been able to establish, it was not until spring of 1985 that I made my first written contribution to the *Heath Herald* - a tribute to the late John Francis Porter. There were some 20 or so subsequent articles and/or reports, the last one being my story of the Wayside Will Rogers (Joe Davenport) in the December 1989-January 1990 issue.

(Editors Note: In lieu of a longer article of recollections, we decided to rerun this article because Joe Davenport is still entertaining us.)

THE WAYSIDE WILL ROGERS

How many of us, as we drive down to the Valley, experience a sense of anticipation as we approach the Mobil station in Shelburne, a couple of hundred yards beyond the Sweetheart Restaurant? What, we ask ourselves, is Joe Davenport up to today?

My first encounter with Joe Davenport was a few years back. I needed his help in changing a wheel on my 1967 VW bug. I had already come to regard his wayside announcements, or pronouncements, as one of the special attractions of the Mohawk Trail, and I asked him if he had kept a record of them. He seemed somewhat taken aback by my question. "No," he said, "I never bothered to do that." And so we social historians - including Joe himself - are left to scratch around in our unhelpful memories.

Joe's manner is hardly what one might call ebullient. He is about as deadpan as Ned Sparks. Remember him? Three winters ago, if memory serves, Joe posted a notice reading: REGISTER HERE FOR SNOW-SHOVELING LESSONS. Hoping that I might learn something from an expert I drove into the Station and presented myself to Joe, I would like to enroll in the snow-shoveling class I said. His unsmiling response was, "Sorry. We're full up. The next opening will be in July. Come back then."

The following October I toyed with the idea of wedging a garden rake into my Rabbit in order to respond to the announcement of AUTUMN LEAVES FOR SALE: RAKE YOUR OWN AND SAVE. I would have persisted had it not been for the disincentive of a warning notice, posted the following week: DANGER FALLING LEAVES.

When I pulled into the station the other week, reacting to the invitation to TRY NEW AND IMPROVED JOE DAVENPORT, I asked the boss how it had all begun. He explained that about ten years ago, when he took over the Station, he had installed the two-sided notice board with the intention of renting

the space on one side - the west side-to some other local business. The first and only renter had been The Railroad Crossing Restaurant, whose use of the notice board had before long been deemed by the Town to represent a technical infraction of Shelburne's zoning bylaw concerning "off-the-premises" advertising. Joe had accordingly been left with both sides of the board to fill. His fertile imagination and satirical talent and his well-developed sense of the absurd immediately went to work.

Thus it was that the eastbound traveler was invited to ENJOY OUR FIFTY-FOOT VIEW, and to HONK IF YOU LOVE JOSEPH, or to try Joe's gasoline, REGULAR OR CAFFEINE-FREE, which, in either blend, has LESS CALORIES THAN FUDGE.

The Davenport family's dedicated customer service was touted in an announcement which read: YES, SCARLETT, AT DAVENPORT'S WE DO GIVE A DAMN. And customer approval was solicited by: HAVE YOU HUGGED YOUR GAS ATTENDANT TODAY? - a question which, Joe told me with the faintest hint of a smile, had evoked a gratifyingly large physical response. On the other hand so many customers misconstrued a Thanksgiving announcement: HAVE A TURKEY FILL YOUR TANK, that it had to be hastily withdrawn.

Gas stations are places where a traveler can get or hope to get information. Davenport's is no exception. It even advertises. For example, FREE INFORMATION: CORRECT INFORMATION - \$6.00. And, a month or so ago, WILL EXCHANGE INFORMATION FOR HOT GOSSIP AND RUMORS.

And history has not been neglected. Joe's researches have shown - to his own satisfaction at least - that it was at his Mobil Station that the MOHAWK INDIANS BOUGHT THEIR GASOLINE.

The Joe Davenports are a large family, in more senses than one. There are two sons. Ben, 6 feet 4 inches, is dwarfed by his brother Matthew, who is built on the same lines as the Chicago Bears' Refrigerator. Daughter Sarah, who like her mother Sylvia, also plays her part at the Station, has the appearance of a Nordic Goddess. How far do they all collaborate in the formulation of Joe's announcements? Not at all, say the two boys. But Joe himself indicates that the family has occasionally imposed a veto. And he acknowledges that Sylvia (who, by the way, is a Heathen by origin) was the author of two of this past year's advertisements. The first, reversing her husband's intended battling order of the family team, read: SYLVIA, DAUGHTER, SONS, AND HUSBAND. The second: DR. RUTH ASKS US.

It should be added that the notice board has not been used exclusively to further the Davenport commercial interests and to share Joe's antiquarian discoveries with the lay public. The possession of a notice board is almost bound to kindle political ambitions. And so, for several years now, Joe has been seeking elective office. Last November he ran for President. When I dropped by to announce to him that he would have my vote - but only if he would first divulge the name of his running mate - he told me, "It's up for the highest bid."

I hope he will run again. We could use a few more politicians with a sense of humor.

~ Alastair Maitland

HEATH HERALD STAFF CHANGES THROUGH THE YEARS

- 1979** - Mike Bakalar leaves at the end of the year to start the *Shelburne Falls and West County News*.
Ralph Dickinson begins "Heath Precipitation," continues until 1994.
- 1980** - Newland Smith joins the staff as Typographer
Amy Barry joins as Staff Reporter.
- 1982** - Edith Royer takes over the gathering of material for "Milestones" which she continues until 2002.
- 1983** - Sue Silvester joins as staff reporter.
- 1984** - Alli Thane goes from editorial staff to reporter.
Helen Nichols joins as editorial assistant until 1987
Harriet Read leaves paper.
- 1985** -Pat Leuchtman joins as staff reporter.
Alli Thane rejoins the editorial staff.
- 1987** - Beverly den Ouden joins as staff reporter
Ray Pettengill takes over Advertising from John Read.
Alastair Maitland joins as editorial assistant until 1990.
- 1989** - Caroline and Newland Smith and Alli Thane leave the paper.
Sue Silvester becomes Managing Editor
Pegge Howland, General Editing and Layout
Alastair Maitland and David Gibbons, Copy Editors
Edith Royer, Bev denOuden, Karen Brooks, Cindy Rice, Staff Reporters
Ray Pettengill, Advertising
Terry Pettengill, Circulation and Business
Arlene Markert, Typography
- 1990** - Michael Peters joins as staff photographer, and Todd Sumner as staff reporter.
Elsa Bakalar begins "Green Thoughts," and Michael Coe becomes columnist.
- 1991** - Bill Lattrell begins "Wild Ramblings."
Bonnie Wodin as staff reporter, begins "Connections."
Carroll Stowe, after many contributions over the years, begins "The Way It Is in the Country."
- 1992** - Pat Leuchtman returns and takes over "Connections."
Betsey Silvester's music column "Adagio." - 1993
- 1993** - Deborah Phillips joins as assistant to Terry Pettengill
David Gibbons, Karen Brooks, and Todd Sumner leave.
- 1994** - Ray and Terry Pettengill leave.
Deborah Phillips takes over Advertising, Business, and Circulation
Jesse Seaver joins as columnist until 1997.
- 1995** - Laurie Wheeler joins staff as columnist, then as staff reporter, and Alice Kinsman takes over Typography from Arlene Markert.
Alan Nichols takes over "Heath Precipitation."
- 1998** - Chloe Allaire joins editorial staff until 1989.
Laurie Wheeler Burrington takes over Typography from Alice Kinsman.
Jack Cable joins as columnist, "View from Burnt Hill."

- Joanne Fortune, RN, begins "Town Nurse Notes."
- 1999** - After twenty years on the paper's editorial staff, Pegge Howland becomes a Consultant.
Laurie Wheeler Burrington becomes Assistant Managing Editor.
Diane Cote as Typographer and Jane deLeeuw as copy editor join the staff.
Terry Pettengill rejoins as food editor - 2000
Sue Silvester resigns as Managing Editor.
Laurie Wheeler Burrington becomes Managing Editor and does Layout as well.
- 2000** - Dianne Cerone joins as Communication Liaison, then Coordinator.
Laurie Wheeler Burrington leaves paper.
Lea Banks Bohrer becomes Managing Editor.
Patricia Greene and Rob Rode briefly tackle Design and Layout.
- 2001** - Eileen Tougas joins the staff as Design and Layout Editor. (O Happy Day!)
- 2002** - Lea Banks Bohrer resigns as Managing Editor.
- 2002** - Eileen Tougas and Jane deLeeuw become co- editors with able staff:
Deborah Phillips - Advertising, Business, and Circulation
Diane Cote - Typographer
Dianne Cerone - Coordinator
- 2003** - Susan Todd begins Heath Elementary School column.
Jodi Walsh joins us briefly as an assistant to Eileen.

In 2002, Adam Printers cut us loose and trial and error search for new printer began with some good and some not so results. Finally, we decided on Staples whose staff generally does a good job at a reasonable cost.

We have been pleased by the number of people who have come forward with articles on a variety of subjects. Our goal is to continue to have a lively mix of town reports, historical articles, and creative efforts.

Former editors have continued to support us, Alli Thane-Stetson and Sue Silvester with town history, Pegge Howland with the Heath Deed Transfers, and Laurie Wheeler Burrington with creative pieces, and all with kudos when we get it right and on-going encouragement. We are very happy that Bill Lattrell has come back with "Wild Ramblings," that Elsa Bakalar will continue her "Green Thoughts" and Ray Pettengill his "Rays of Interest," that Michael Coe will send us reports of his travels and Pat Leuchtman will supply "Connections" from time to time. And we depend on the writers of Town Reports, Charlene Churchill, Brian DeVriese, Dave Howland, Becky Jurek, Val Kaempfer, Tim Lively, Alan Nichols, Richards Steinbock, Hilma Sumner, Susan Todd, and Michael Wilmeth, to supply us with what we need to know, and on Town Nurse Joanne Fortune, to keep us healthy.

**THANKS TO ONE AND ALL!!!! AND
HERE'S TO ANOTHER 25!**

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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."

The Letter M

By Carroll Stowe

There's a question about what's in a name. In this case, the question is what's in a letter - the letter "M."

For a lot of years I've had a fetish about the letter "M" affixed to the engine hood of the, at one time, large tractor of International Harvester. The W9 was their largest standard tread tractor but the M was the largest row-crop tractor. This model tractor could be had with a gas-start diesel engine. These units served the industry very well.

I wish to relate about an M Farmall that has spent much time here in Heath. This tractor was acquired by Steve and Sandy Kinsman who live on Hosmer Road here in Heath. I pointed these folks in the direction of this unit. This was the first time I ever received a thank-you note for a deed like that. I would like to find an M Farmall for all who would like and appreciate one. I would rather not line any one up with one of these old legends who didn't live each day looking for a job an M can do.

Recently Steve has been out of work and took his free time to dismantle this unit's engine and thoroughly rebuild it with new sleeves and pistons, rings, valve job, gaskets, and what ever else it could use. I was able to be in attendance the second time he started it. Those old 4-cylinder gas engines have a very special kind of thunder when they are running as they were intended to. The combination of these new parts and Steve's careful attention to doing it right created a great sounding engine.

Every time it's my pleasure to hear this legendary iron running and doing what it does best. It has always been my wish that any heavy-duty iron car, and truck should be as faithful and long lasting as a Farmall M has been and still doing their jobs.

There's an old M at a potato farm in East Hawley, that has prepared a lot of potato land, cultivated these acres, and powered many harvests. The now deceased owner told me years ago that there would always be a job for that old tractor. I called the son of this late potato farmer to find out how many plantings and harvests this great old servant had attended and the answer I received was an instant 55 crops to date. This M is a 1949 model, and it's 2004! This is some good service. I never worked an M in farming but am proud to have spent many hours on our town's M Farmall scraping roads.

The Kinsman tractor has spent time ahead of a haybaler and operated a surface planer at Clark's sawmill. It most certainly needed its engine job and the time spent for a good job.

Steve took a lot of pains to do the job to perfection. Every time he works this unit he can be well satisfied with his work. I am happy to have helped the Kinsmans to have and enjoy this long lasting tribute to the Farmall name. I am proud to call Steve and Sandy my friends. These are my thoughts of the letter "M."



Town Nurse Notes

Freedom From Stress



By Joanne Fortune, RN

I recently participated in an intensive workshop with Byron Katie who, in 1986, introduced a method to help us learn to accept reality as it is, instead of wishing things were different. How many times in a day do we think, "She shouldn't have done that," or "He should take better care of himself" when we really can't change the way things are. This philosophy is called 'The Work' at www.thework.org. Katie believes that stress is caused from fighting with reality.

She also teaches that much of our stress comes from mentally living out of our own business. When we think, "You need a better job" or "You need to spend less money," we are in someone else's business. If we are mentally living someone else's life, who is living ours?

Her book, *Loving What Is, Four Questions That Can Change Your Life*, discusses how we can use this method to free us from stress. First; write down your judgments about any stressful situation in your life, past; present, or future - about a person you dislike or a situation with someone who angers, frightens, or saddens you. Then ask if it is true; can you absolutely know that it's true? Even if the answer is 'yes,' the next question asks how you react when you think that thought and who would you be without that thought? Finally, turn the statement around and think about what the turnaround could mean. For example, "I need to spend less money," or "I'm not listening to him."

The Work doesn't tell us what we should or shouldn't do. It asks, "What is the effect of arguing with reality? How does it feel?" It explores the cause and effect of attaching to painful thoughts, and, in that investigation, we find our freedom.

I make home visits on Tuesdays and have an office hour in the Assessors' Office in Sawyer Hall on Tuesdays from noon until 1 p.m. If anyone would like a visit, please call me at 774-2958 to set up a time. Thank you.



Milestones

Luella M. Sessions Bigelow, 52, of Heath, died February 27, 2004, at the Anchorage Nursing Home in Shelburne. Born in Heath July 10, 1951, she was the daughter of Richard and Ellen Hillman Sessions. She attended local schools and graduated from Mohawk Trail Regional High School. A homemaker, she also assisted with the daily operations of the family farm.

Survivors include her husband of thirty-three years, Stephen; two sons, Stephen R. and Larry J., both of Heath; three brothers, Allan Sessions, Richard Sessions Jr., and Robert Sessions, all of Heath, and two sisters, Grace Vollinger of Northampton and Sara Menard of Jacksonville, VT.

Burial will take place in North Cemetery in the spring.

The Right Reverend David Bell Birney IV, retired bishop of the Episcopal Church, died at his home in Danville, KY, on February 13, 2004.

In addition to holding many positions both in the United States and in Africa, he served, prior to retirement, as an assistant bishop in the Diocese of Massachusetts, side-by-side with his colleague, the Right Reverend Barbara Harris, first woman bishop of the church, who, per his request, delivered the homily at his Memorial Service in Danville.

Bishop Birney is survived by his family in Danville and by his sister, **Jane Birney deLeeuw**, of Heath, and his brother, Frank Walshe Birney of Studio City, CA.

Ellen A. Tecu King, 85, of Hosmer Road, Heath, died March 4, 2004, at the home of her daughter and son-in-law, Janis and Calvin Carr, with whom she had lived for the past five years.

Born in St. Louis, MO, May 13, 1918, she was the daughter of Augustus and Ella Rudolf Tecu.

In addition to her daughter, she is survived by her brother, Edward Tecu of Missouri, five grandchildren, and sixteen great-grandchildren.

A daughter, Sandra Carson, died in 1995. Her ex-husband, Henry F. King, died in 1994.

Mabel M. LaPierre Phelps of Buckland died on March 9, 2004. Born in Heath on May 5, 1908, she was the daughter of William and Mary Peon LaPierre. She was a graduate of Arms Academy and the former Bliss School of Business in North Adams.

Ms. Phelps worked at the Kendall Company, the Shelburne Falls Savings Bank, LaPierre Electrical Store as manager, Greenfield Component, and Aliber's Store. Just prior to retirement, she served as secretary and receptionist at the Snelling Employment Agency in Greenfield.

For many years, she was the organist at the St. John the Baptist Church in Griswoldville.

Survivors include her son, John "Jack" F. Phelps of Erving; her daughter, Bonnie Lee Craig of Conway; four grandchildren, and a great-grandson.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 34 Monroe Avenue, Shelburne Falls 01370; to Hospice of Western New England, 164 High Street, Greenfield 01301, or to Meals on Wheels, TC Home Care, 330 Montague City Road, Turners Falls 01376.

Virginia H. Hatley Taylor, 76, of Turners Falls, died February 8, 2004. Born in Concord, NC, August 1, 1927, she was the daughter of Franklin and Zula Furr Hatley. She was a graduate of Endy High School and of Morgan's Business School in Albemarle, NC.

She had been a resident of Turners Falls since 1962 and was employed by the Pro-Brush Co. in Florence for thirty years before retiring in 1966.


Her husband, Wilbert E. Taylor, died in 1974. Survivors include three sons, **Marvin E. "Buster"** of Heath, Bruce D. of Greenfield, and Michael J. of Shelburne Falls; two daughters, Linda I. Fagan of Plaistow, NH, and Wanda J. Moore of Turners Falls; two brothers, Ted Hatley and Billy Jo Hatley, both of Albemarle; thirteen grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren, and her stepmother, Wilma Hatley, of Albemarle.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Arthritis Foundation, Massachusetts Chapter, 29 Crafts St., Suite 450, Newton, MA 02158-1287.

Dorothy M. "Dot" Cellillie Vilbon, 73, died February 17, 2004. Born June 17, 1930, she was the daughter of Charles and Florence Charland Cellillie. She graduated from Cathedral High School and was a resident of South Hadley for fifty years. She retired from Mount Holyoke College where she had worked for thirty years.

Survivors include her husband, Alfred "Ray" Vilbon; four sons, David of Chesterfield, **Brian** of Heath, Peter of Ludlow, and Kevin of Belchertown; two daughters, Susan Cooney of Sayre, PA, and **Linda Marcotte** of Heath; one sister, Barbara Siana, of Ludlow, and eight grandchildren.

Requiescat in pace



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FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Selectboard (BOS) and Finance Committee (FinCom) have geared up for the FY05 budget season. Starting in February budget hearings were held by the Board with at least one member of the FinCom in attendance. Beginning in March there will be joint meetings to sort out priorities. Whether the Annual Town Meeting will be held in May or delayed to June has not been determined yet, because the Legislature is mulling over the Governor's budget and there is a serious problem locally with the proposed budget of the Mohawk Trail Regional School District (MTRSD).

The issue with the MTRSD budget is the level funding of Chapter 70 Aid for FY05 when that Aid was already cut 20% to 159 cities and towns in FY04. That cut amounted to \$1.4 million for the District and was exacerbated by the reduction of about \$470,000 in support for busing, which is known as Chapter 71. In order to present and pass an affordable budget in FY04, that was still up 11% after cuts in staff and programs, the MTRSD drew on Reserves, Medicaid benefits, and Interest Income totaling \$810,000. This is an unusually high amount of offset income to use to balance the budget, but it became necessary when a change in Ed Reform numbers was received very late in the budget process. Nevertheless, it impacts adversely on assessments for FY05 as will be seen in the next paragraph. To address this rather obvious inequitable situation with regard to the distribution of Chapter 70 Aid, the Legislature formed a Working Group to study the Ed Reform distribution formula and in December 2003 they issued an excellent report wherein they asked for comments by mid-January. Not much time for a complicated subject and a difficult one for a group to consider. In any event Dave Howland, who has prepared most of the Town's "pothole" applications, filed a response to the Group suggesting some formulaic changes and the dispensing with some variables that have resulted in unpredictable annual amounts of Aid. Marguerite Willis of Charlemont also submitted some ideas. A Lobbying Group has been formed at MTRSD to follow up with the Governor and Legislators on Chapter 70 and Chapter 71 (busing) issues. The Heath Selectboard has written local legislators requesting that Chapter 71 be fully funded, as called for in the Legislation, but which has been largely ignored when it comes time to appropriate the money.

Now comes the Governor's FY05 Chapter 70 budget. It was increased 2.2% or \$69.6 million, but 215 operating school districts including the MTRSD were "level funded," while 113 received increases. The Department of Education (DOE) again "tweaked" the Ed Reform formula, but without any apparent benefit to "level funded" schools. On March 10, 2004, the MTRSD School Committee reluctantly but unanimously passed a "level services" budget for FY05, which excludes further cuts but provides for contract commitments, increases for supplies and services, and out-of-control health care costs. The Capital budget increased also, mostly due to loss of reserves that have helped keep annual payments fairly level. When all is said and done Heath's share of the Mohawk school budget is up 29.3% or \$2.93 at current property valuation. When added to FY04's rate of \$22.05 we see a

rate of \$24.98 and that is without any consideration of other needs of the Town. This whopping increase is the result of holding down the assessment numbers in FY04 with additional reserves, which simply are not as available for FY05 as they were in FY04, the "level funding" of Chapter 70 Aid, and the increased costs of a "level services" budget. Superintendent Genovese has indicated further cuts are not possible without "changing the way we do business," but part of his/our problem is maintaining legally required mandates in the face of declining State support. Thus, costs are transferred to local taxpayers. This exorbitant increase is just too much for Heath and many of the other towns in the District to absorb; consequently there is a lot of strategizing going on about options including overrides, postponing the Annual Town Meeting, and lobbying the Governor and Legislators. Something needs to be done soon about runaway school budgets. It is not just the dollars; it is also the adverse impact on educating our children.

Still on the matter of education, some good news is that the MTRSD received \$200,000 in "pothole" funds for FY04. Primarily it will be used to support some programs that had to be severely cut earlier in the year. MTRSD Superintendent Alan Genovese is to be congratulated on persuading the Department of Education (DOE) of the District's needs considering the limited amount of "pothole" funds available.

There is one other matter involving the DOE. First, Heath's support from the State for its mortgage on the Heath School was reduced arbitrarily in October by 1%, or \$1,970, due to the budget deficit. The Selectboard and FinCom wrote a strong letter of objection to Governor Romney. After all, Heath and many other cities and towns predicate their debt load based on commitments from the State. Steps may have been taken by the State to reinstate this loss. Then, in December the Town received a letter from DOE's auditor, who four years after submission, reviewed the Town's invoices on school construction and purchasing of furniture and equipment. The auditor challenged some of the data. The Town appealed the matter, which is not unusual. Treasurer Kris Nartowicz took the lead in this effort and appears to have it resolved. Unfortunately, reconciliation of all the submissions, some of which were good guesstimates, indicates there will be a reduction in School Building Aid of about \$7,000 per year over the next twelve years, but, again, this is not unusual. The Town does have some \$53,000 in reserves to help stabilize annual payments.

The issue of giant trucks loaded with demolition material from Yankee Atomic Electric Company (YAEC) passing through Heath is under review. In the meantime no trucks are going through Heath. The truck accident/spill on March 2nd in Rowe may have some impact on the whole matter. The Selectboard and FinCom are monitoring the situation in the interest of safety and protecting the Town against liability and damage to our roads.

("Finance Committee Report" continued on page 19)

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Housing Rehabilitation Program

The annual gross incomes necessary to obtain a FY 2003 Housing Rehabilitation Program full-deferred payment loan of up to \$25,000 have been changed to the following:

<u># in Household</u>	<u>Gross Annual Income</u>
1	\$34,550
2	\$39,500
3	\$44,400
4	\$49,350
5	\$53,300
6	\$57,250
7	\$61,200
8	\$65,150

The application deadline is now **May 1, 2004**. For further information, please call Charity Day @ (413) 863-9781 ext. 132, if you are interested in the Town of Heath Housing Rehabilitation Program.

Council on Aging/Community Hall

Since the closing of the Community Hall for renovations, both committees have been fairly idle. We did have a combined meeting of the Council on Aging and Community Hall Committees with Ray Pettengill who was appointed by the Selectboard to serve as Senior Center Coordinator. We discussed his duties in that capacity. We know he will be an asset for the center. He is going to take a course in grant writing so he'll be able to fill that role for us.

The bids on the hall have finally been awarded so work can get started soon. Hopefully everything will move along smoothly, and the project will be completed on time — September 30, 2004. We are all looking forward to having a "Grand Opening" potluck supper to celebrate the completion of the project.

~Val Kaempfer, For the Council on Aging /
Community Hall Committee, Senior Center

THE GREAT MOHAWK SAVE OUR SCHOOLS CONCERT TO BENEFIT MOHAWK PROGRAMS

The Hilltown Save our Schools (Hilltown SOS) organization is sponsoring *The Great Mohawk Save Our Schools Concert* on **April 8, 2004, at 7p.m.** in the Mohawk Regional High School Auditorium on Route 112, Shelburne Falls.

Inspired by Yosl Kurland of the Wholesale Klezmer Band, five nationally acclaimed, award winning local performing groups are teaming up to do a benefit concert to save our schools. Davis Bates and Roger Tincknell, Charlie King and Karen Brandow, Yosl Kurland and members of the Wholesale Klezmer Band, Sarah Pirtle, and Molly Scott with Ferne Bork, Bruce Kahn and Dan Tinen are all generously donating an evening of their marvelous stories and songs to help raise money, awareness and voices to support Mohawk District Schools.

The Hilltown SOS was founded in response to the funding crisis of public education over the past few years. Schools have endured drastic state funding cutbacks, impacting all aspects of their infrastructure, while the local communities struggle with an increased tax burden for education costs. "A strong public education system is absolutely essential for the preservation of our democracy," states Susan Todd, Selectwoman for the Town of Ashfield, Principal of Heath Elementary and one of the founding members of Hilltown SOS," but unfortunately our current legislative mechanisms for funding education are destabilizing, short-term ones that are dramatically eroding the very viability of our schools." The Hilltown SOS is dedicated to achieving immediate relief and long range restructuring of public school financing. Sponsoring this concert is a first step toward that goal.

Admission is \$5.00 per person with a maximum cost of \$20.00 for any one family. Tickets will be available at the door or can be purchased in advance through the schools, or at the following locations: Nolan's Neighbors in Ashfield, Avery's Store in Charlemont, Boswell's Books in Shelburne Falls and at Colrain Supergas in Colrain. Individuals who would like to get involved with the activities of the Hilltown SOS may call Mary Link at 628-4695.

(*"Finance Committee Report"* continued from page 18)

Some other good news is that the Town's Free Cash came in at \$143,080, which is higher than expected. The reasons are that tax collections, especially back taxes, are up, the Town received some \$17,000 from an overage in the MTRSD reserve fund and about 2% of the budget or some \$20,000 was not used. The latter is not excessive and reflects on the prudent administration of the budget by the Selectboard and Department Heads. When a particular budget problem occurred during the year every other option was looked at with a view towards conserving money. The Selectboard and FinCom were diligent in this respect. The Town used \$40,000 in Free Cash to lower the tax rate for FY04 and \$100,000 in Stabilization money to purchase a new Fire Truck, which has now arrived and is going through its shake-down period. Those previous commitments can impact on the use of the Free Cash and on the planning of the FY05 budget.

Budge Litchfield has been appointed to the Safety Complex Building Committee, a long-range-planning group. We regret to report that Charlene Churchill will not run again for the FinCom. She has been a valuable member of our team. We invite inquiries from those interested in becoming a write-in candidate.

~ *Finance Committee*: Dave Howland, Chair,
Ned Wolf, Secretary, Charlene Churchill,
David Cote, Budge Litchfield

(*"Hitching Post"* continued from page 8)

The stone hitching post is mysterious in age and history, but I am drawn to its solid shape that has stayed intact over years of not being used and not being known about. Standing strong it gives me sense of comfort in the swooshing of change.

I am drawn to peeking out my window and simply looking at its little monolithic outline. It will be beautiful with moonlight, as it is with the blue gray shadow tracks of the maples crisscrossing in back of it. Interesting that a stone's permanency is used to build an object that facilitates travel.

~ Laurie Wheeler Burrington

Heath Emergency Services News

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

- 1/09/04 - Wigwam Drive - Medical
- 1/12/04 - Long Hill Road - Standby for structure fire
- 1/14/04 - Papoose Drive - Medical
- 1/29/04 - South Road - Medical
- 2/08/04 - Route 8A North - Medical
- 2/11/04 - Colrain Stage Road - Medical
- 2/18/04 - Route 8A North - Medical
- 2/20/04 - Route 8A North - Standby for motor vehicle accident
- 2/24/04 - West Main Street - Medical
- 3/03/04 - Route 8A North - Medical
- 3/05/04 - Main Street - Medical
- 3/06/04 - Sherman Drive - Medical

~ Timothy Lively, EMT

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