



# HEATH HERALD

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## Heath's First Newspaper

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*Happy Holidays!*





## Heath Herald

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Jan Carr

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Dianne Cerone

Henry Leuchtman

Bill Lattrell,

Pat Leuchtman, Sheila Litchfield,  
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**Contributors** Robin Booth, Dee Brochu, Jack Cable, Bob Delisle, Finance Committee, Gloria Fisher, Richard and Esther Gallup, Pastor Phill Grant, Heath School Staff and Students, Heath Union Church, Ruth Johnson, Timothy Lively, Local Education Council, Hazel Porter Maitland, Robert McGahan, Pam Porter, PTP, The Selectboard, Jeff Simmons, Doug Stetson, Bob Viarengo

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### Heath Union Church News

Our sanctuary is being painted so as of November 18, the adult study group at 9:00 a.m. and the Sunday morning worship service at 10:00 a.m. are being held in the lower level of the Church.

Pastor Grant will be at the Church, as usual, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Thursdays. He can be reached there at 337-4019, at his home at 413- 648-9077, or contact Deacon Gallup at 337-5367.

Advent Season celebrations will begin on December 2 with the lighting of the first Advent candle. One will be lighted thereafter at each Sunday service until the Christmas Eve service at 7:00 p.m. when we light the Christ Candle. This service, as well as Christmas Sunday's, will be held back in the sanctuary. Please come and join our congregation in these Christmas season observances.

In the near future we are planning an evening presentation by traveling members to the Holy Land and to Iceland. Look for the date and time.

~ The Deacons

### Some Impressions of the Holy Land

This fall, the Crystal Cathedral Church from Garden Grove, California, sponsored an eight-day trip to the Holy Land. I was part of that group. I met and visited with our host, Pastor Robert Schuller Jr.

The land of Israel is a mix of productive agriculture and barren desert and is about the size of Massachusetts. The food is delicious and it is okay to drink the water. The Sea of Galilee is simply beautiful to see, to sail on, and to swim in. Jerusalem is both old and new. It seems to rise out of the desert sand. Bethlehem was very different from what I expected. Where I envisioned inns and stables, there were huge old churches. A newly built cement wall surrounds the city. There were soldiers and police with machine guns. There were a few small children following us around asking for money. I never felt unsafe or threatened during my whole visit, however.

Don't be afraid to visit this country. It is rich in culture, history, and emotion for all Christians, Jews, Muslims, and non-churchgoers alike.

~ Pastor Phill Grant

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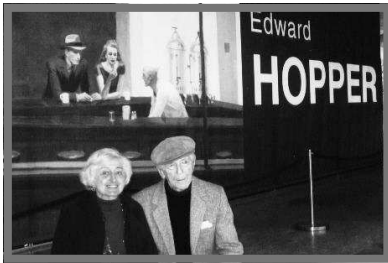
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## A Trip to Our Nation's Capital



*Photograph courtesy of  
Hazel Porter Maitland*

Washington, D.C. is an exciting city to visit. Its handsome memorials to Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln remain in memory for years. This year Alastair and I visited the John F. Kennedy Center, built in 1971. It is the home of the

Performing Arts Center which caters to the National Symphony Orchestra, the Washington Opera, the American Film Institute, and houses six theaters for ballet, music, films, and commissioned works. Every night there are free musical presentations from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.- this is for performing small groups. Many gifts were received from all over the world to honor JFK, e.g. the beautiful chandeliers donated by Sweden.

The Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park has great sculptures of FDR with his dog, Fala, and with Eleanor. and of an impressive standing group of men waiting in line for work and food. The Vietnam Memorial and the new Circle of Fountains making up the World War II Memorial, you cannot forget. The Holocaust Museum requires time and takes a toll on your emotions. The Indian Museum has many exhibits that will interest children as well as adults.

Capitol Hill has been calling to me for years, so this was our motive for taking this trip. We somehow expected to see the full Senate in session, however, saw only a few men in their seats while two senators spoke about this being the anniversary of the death of an important man, Senator Paul Wellstone. They spoke about the legislation he had introduced.

Then we traveled in the tunnels (because of rain) to the House of Representatives' Gallery in which a vote was being taken on the Child Insurance Bill. (On request, Speaker Nancy Pelosi had mailed us gallery tickets). House members were called by name, wrote their vote on either a green or red card, dropped it in a box, and left. Then a member rose to tell us of his annoyance that Pelosi spoke of democracy, yet had given the bill to the House less than 24 hours before. We left.

The next stop was to the new Library of Congress Building. I believe every published book in the U.S. is recorded here. Then on to the old building which has been repainted. We were most impressed with the choice of quotations by famous men printed on the ceiling.

A call to my cousin and we were picked up to carry on great conversations at the home of Betsy and Michael Kraft, lifelong residents of Georgetown. Driving through the rain for three days, we were transported to various places, to many parks with bike paths that gave us a human view of life in this city.

One noon we met Michael, who had been a correspondent, at the Press Club for lunch. It was interesting to see the reporters from all over the world who actually live and work in this building. Another interesting event was conversation with Georgetown neighbors who grow their own food at age 84! Van cuts up

local fallen trees to feed his two woodstoves. He also cycles 20 miles a day and 50 miles on weekends. His wife, Ellie, a granddaughter of Eleanor and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, is a former teacher. She had spent considerable time in the White House while growing up. These people are all involved in community activities ..so like Heath.

We totally enjoyed the redone Patent Building, now the National Portrait Gallery which houses the official presidential portraits. All are formally done except for the dramatic one of Jack Kennedy which is a modern oil painting in broad green and white strokes. A visit here would be particularly interesting for children who want to learn about presidential history. One short documentary showed FDR giving his speech at the beginning of World War II when he spoke of our need to sacrifice, to keep factories open 24 hours daily, and to begin rationing. It felt like a great contrast to us today.

Overhead in the modern wing of the National Gallery of Art was a huge Alexander Calder mobile which moves with the natural flow of air. The Edward Hopper exhibit was there, having just come down from Boston. Hopper was an artist whose sense of light and ordinary places was his theme.

I believe I learned that government takes place in small rooms where discussion of issues and bills takes place, not in the huge House of Representatives or Senate chambers. It is not in the scrum of chaos one sees in their large chambers. The existing institutions with statues and pictures remind me of how much history holds us together. Next time I would like to sit in on one of those small committees to hear men and women debate issues. For me, the people in Washington take the cake. They are down-to-earth, involved citizens with ideas.

*~ Hazel Porter Maitland*

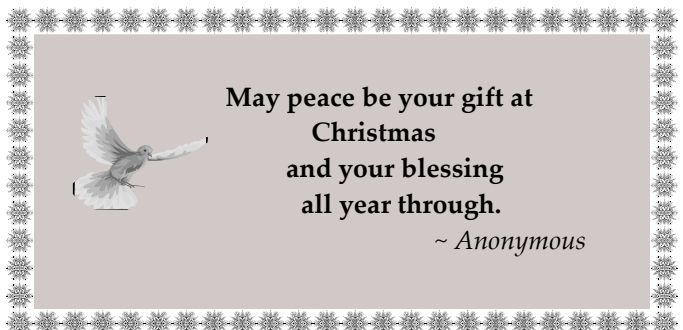
## A Cover in Color? How Did That Happen?

The *Heath Herald* staff announces the acquisition of a laser color printer that enables us to print our own paper and gives us the capability of adding color from time to time.

We hope to make our printing services available to the public as time allows. For further information regarding cost, call Eileen Tougas at 337-8558.

Long a dream, we finally were motivated to take this giant step due to escalating printing costs.

Let us know how you think we are doing.





### Wild Ramblings

## Movements in the Stream of Consciousness

By Bill Lattrell



It is early in the morning of September 27, 2007, and I am sitting on a fallen poplar tree that spans a brook, with my feet, clad in insulated rubber boots, planted firmly on a gravel streambed. The nearest town is about 200 miles to the southwest, and I am alone on this day in the northern Quebec wilderness. The warm weather is breaking all known records for this area, although I cannot say at this moment I am not enjoying the warm sun on my face that offsets the cool brook that runs over my feet.

The moose hunting has been slow due to the unusual weather and so I find I have a lot of time on my hands while waiting for lady luck to show her face in this deep wilderness. The Quebec bush is impenetrable; a maze and mesh of low conifers, fallen trees, and underbrush that is almost impossible to navigate. I am left to exploring streambeds, lake edges, and wide-open wetlands if I am to traverse these territories at all. Up here in the north, conifer trees are stunted, and peat moss dominates the open landscape. Earlier frosts have turned the few hardwood leaves to gold and red colors, while the carpets of frosted ruby red peat moss that blanket the wetlands contrast sharply against the deep green spruce and fir trees that grow sparsely throughout the open water swamps. Slow hunting means time for observing, reflecting, and absorbing my surroundings. In any case, I feel very fortunate to be here.

There are two little pools, created by fallen fir branches, near my feet in the stream. Here the current slows for a moment as the water searches for a path through the needles on the branches. Downstream there are more riffles and pools, all glistening as the sun rises higher in the sky. The stream drains to the east, so there are no shadows present at this time. Looking into the clear water is like looking into a long, flat aquarium. Rocks, waterlogged branches and logs, elongated bars of sand, along with the occasional trout can all be seen. In one pool, near my feet, there are a dozen or so whirlygigs. These tiny water beetles move about randomly, turning at crazy angles suddenly and without caution or end. Their movement creates a sense of chaos within the boundary of the pool. I watch these little guys for quite a while, convinced that there must be purpose to their outrageous patterns of motion. I study their unpredictable movements so long that I have myself convinced, for a moment, that if I stare at the whirlygigs long enough I will crack the code and find meaning to their short, random, wanderings. Are they defending territory? Are they competing for food? Perhaps, I reason, their movements are meant as a distraction to predators, thereby increasing the odds of survival for the group at the expense of an individual.

A long gob of time goes by as I watch them at my feet in the quiet water, and I am reminded of John Forbes Nash, the famous mathematician, whose life was portrayed in the movie "A Beautiful Mind." John Nash was the winner of the 1994 Nobel Prize in Economics for his mathematical ideas regarding gaming and random theory. For a long period of time (some say he was suffering from schizophrenia) Nash thought that he could see mathematical patterns in everything, leaves falling off trees, people in transition at a busy bus station, even rain falling from the sky. Perhaps he could, but most of the rest of the world perceived that he was mentally ill. Given this thought, I decide it would be best if I halted my fixation on the whirlygigs' movements and pursue other thoughts.

I come to the Quebec wilderness at least once a year. Few people understand how vast it is. Quebec is about 600,000 square miles in size. As a way of comparison the great wilderness of Alaska is just over 650,000 square miles in area. Almost the entire population of Quebec is found in the south along the St. Lawrence River. To the north there are simply miles, and miles, and miles of wilderness. It is a wilderness full of boreal forest, tundra, and wide-open spaces, but very, very few people. Although I am a descendant of Quebec-born ancestors, both of native and European extraction, that is not my only reason to explore this vast region. The fact is that I can get to a very faraway place in only about 12 to 15 hours of driving from my home.

Wild areas, or wilderness, are as different from rural landscapes, as rural landscapes are from urban landscapes. Urban areas have landscapes dominated and designed for the sole convenience of human use. Rural landscapes have many natural features, but large areas of landscape managed for human endeavors. Wilderness is primarily just wild. Here there are enormous areas with few human impacts, although it must be recognized that the logging industry impacts large areas of the far north. Over the years, I have come to realize that it is here that I am most at peace, and although I am probably going to be a lifetime New England resident, I am hopeful that I will always find the time and wisdom to come here so that I can be reminded of what wild really is.

My thoughts are interrupted by two bronze blackbirds that land in the shallow riffles of the stream. This resident of northern conifer forests takes great joy in kicking over dead leaves for hours at a time in search of little benthic insects on which the birds can feast. I have never watched them work a shallow stream bottom before, but I realize that they do this with great efficiency. One bird, presumably the female, works the north side of the stream. The other bird, a brilliantly bronzed male, works the south side of the stream. Almost every submerged leaf is scratched and turned over and about a third of the leaves yield food. The pair seems to work in unison, slowly migrating up the stream on each side until they are both about a yard from my boots, still firmly planted on the stream bottom. Both birds stop, look at my boots and raise their heads slowly as if they are examining every inch of my large

("Wild Ramblings" continued on page 5)



## A Short Summary of My Trip to Iceland

Since I was very young I have been a collector of rocks and have always been interested in what the earth is made of and all the geological activities that occur on this planet of ours. Therefore, when the opportunity arose to visit Iceland, a land geologists consider a mandatory pilgrimage (to quote our leader), I said, YES!

The tour of this island is one of many Fantastic Landscapes trips led by retired professor Dick Little, longtime instructor of geology and oceanography at Greenfield Community College. Having traveled with his group several times in this country including to Alaska, since he started these tours in 1981, I just knew I had to follow the leader again.

This island whose distance north and south is 186 miles and east and west, 310 miles, (somewhat larger than Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire together) packs in most all geological activities. There are areas of volcanoes, geysers, hot springs, lava fields, glaciers, rivers, spectacular waterfalls, and beautiful productive farmland. So it is a unique place to study every geological aspect and is the only place the mid-ocean ridge "spreading center" is exposed. We stood where the European tectonic plate and the North American plate separate and are pulling apart at about 1/2-inch per year in each direction. Because of all these conditions, Reykjavik, the capital, has the world famous geothermal heating system and is one of the least polluted cities in the world.

Our trip consisted of circling the island on the coastal highway, staying two to three days in an area to explore. We climbed old volcanic craters, saw sulfur-smelling geysers and bubbling mud pools, viewed steam vents out in the fields, soaked in a wonderful hot spring pool, hiked to glaciers, boated on a lake full of icebergs, sailed up the fjords, seeing puffins, visited many gorgeous waterfalls, sea caves, and stacks of volcanic rock, crossed a vast outwash plain, and constantly were amazed that nature could have so many spectacular things on one island.

Of course, we had the opportunity to visit small fishing villages, see lovely large and small churches, spend time in museums, and enjoy meeting the natives. Everywhere there were sheep, which, of course, provide the wool for the fabulous Icelandic sweaters. They are very proud of the hardy Icelandic horses, a breed found only there, and so well protected that no other kind of horse can be brought in. If a horse is taken out of Iceland for any reason, it cannot come back. We had a chance to watch riders demonstrate the five gaits unique to this breed. Icelanders no longer use these as draft animals but it was quite obvious they love to ride. We saw horses everywhere in the countryside.

There are so many beautiful places I could tell about in Iceland but that will have to wait until I get up my courage to present my story some evening at a later date. But I do encourage anyone to take a trip to this Fantastic Landscape of Iceland.

~ Ruth Johnson



To the people of Heath,

In leaving my position as the town nurse I didn't get a chance to either inform everyone and/or say goodbye and thank you. I enjoyed getting to know the elders of Heath with all their wisdom and local lore. Being so intimately involved in peoples' lives is an honor and always rewarding. Thanks.

As my family has changed and grown (I have a teen who has been in a growth spurt for more than a year!), I've found it necessary to go back to full-time work. I found a job as a full-time school nurse over in the Gill-Montague School system which I am really enjoying. It's a fast pace with needy kids, and my days feel full and useful.

I'm already missing my time in Heath at a more local pace. I hope to see many of you off and on in the coming months.

My best,  
~ Robin Booth

("Wild Ramblings" continued from page 4)

frame until they both look me squarely in the eye. I expect them to fly off in fright as we stare at each other, but they are not alarmed. Both turn inward towards the stream center, do an about-face and continue their foraging activities, now in a downstream direction. The birds work about a 30-yard section of the stream over and over for about two hours. They never look at me again.

Most animals, birds and mammals alike, have never seen a human in these parts. The nearest road (a 200-mile-long dirt logging road) is about 20 miles away and so their contact with humans is extremely limited. There is no learned fear of people, although most animals are still cautious with humans as an unknown form of life. Yesterday, Steve, my hunting partner, came across two beavers pulling a long branch in the water along the edge of a clear, quiet lake. The beavers noticed him standing there and stopped what they were doing and swam to the edge of the lake. There, without hesitation, they crawled out of the water and marched up to him as if he were an old friend. From a distance of only five or six feet they looked at him up and down, and then they looked at each other, at which time they turned about and marched right back into the water from where they came. Steve, a Marine Corps veteran, told me that the incident made him feel as if he failed inspection and that was the end of that.

The angle of the sun is at its highest point for the day, which means it is nearly noon. It is time to wander slowly back to my camp for our noon meal where my buddy, who has been exploring a different part of the watershed, will meet me. Our shared observations and thoughts may be as random as the whirlygigs navigating the same stream pool over and over again, but like the bronze blackbirds we will likely leave no leaf unturned in our search to understand the ways of the wild as we share our morning observations.

*Green Thoughts***Christmas Trees**

By Pat Leuchtman

Most of us have stories about the best – and the worst – Christmas trees we have had in our lives. Our first Christmas tree in Greenfield was a sorry specimen of hemlock. A kind friend offered to take me and my three daughters, then 10, 8, and 7, out to the country to cut down our own tree, just like in the olden days. This was to be a treat in what was a difficult time in our lives. Unfortunately, he didn't know any more about Christmas trees or evergreens than I did and once the girls got cold and wet, and full of righteous complaint, I decided we just had to pick something and make the best of it. That was the year I learned that a hemlock tree starts shedding its needles just about the time you start talking about bringing it into the house.

Our first year in Heath, we cut down the big stiff Colorado spruce that was growing right in front of a south window depriving us of the warmth and light from that window. It was a gorgeous, symmetrical tree, but it nearly killed us getting it through two doors and into the living room where we wanted to set it up. I don't know if there is any tree that is more recalcitrant or more prickly. Blood was drawn.

After we realized how badly winter snows drifted across our field and onto the road making plowing difficult, if not impossible, we remembered conversations with our first neighbor, Mabel Vreeland. At the time she was in her eighties and told us about the days of her youth when she drove through snowbelt forests in New York State to minister to two or three Seventh Day Adventist churches every Sunday. No man was up to the job, but petite Mabel was at the ready. She sang hymns to the glory of God as she drove through the snowy woods.

She talked about the snow breaks which many planted in that snowy countryside. Snow breaks catch the drifting snow and, as we were to find, are more efficient than snow fences, and don't need to be set out in the fall and taken down in the spring. That spring we bought about 300 tiny evergreen seedlings from the conservation service. We followed the approved snow break plan and planted them in three staggered rows in the field along the road. We chose mostly white pine because they were said to grow fast and were not particular about soil. The trees did grow rapidly and did fulfill their function admirably.

We purposefully over-planted because we planned to take our Christmas tree from the snow break every year. As time went on we also decided we preferred balsam Christmas trees. We put in a couple of dozen balsams, and have added a few in the years since.

I confess that we don't pay any attention to the evergreens during the year. We don't take the time to prune the new growth every spring that will result in a more regular and aesthetically pleasing shape. This has not been a big problem come Christmas. I have a lot of ornaments and I like getting as many of them on the tree as possible. Widely spaced branches make room for the ornaments,

and even if there is a large empty spot I have large ones to fill it.

If you have space and want to grow a few trees to use for your own Christmas celebrations there are a few obvious rules for doing it properly. Do not plant your trees too close together. You want to give the tree room to grow evenly in every direction without being shaded or crowded. In the spring you will see new growth at the end of each branch tip, including the top. Prune that new growth back about a third. This will help insure even, thick growth. It will take about eight years for the kind of small transplant we got from the conservation service to reach ceiling height.

If you want to buy a live Christmas tree you need to think ahead. First, an appropriately sized planting hole needs to be dug. The soil that is removed needs to be kept where it will not freeze, and the planting hole should be filled with bagged leaves or some such to keep the hole from freezing. While you are waiting for the tree to be brought into the house it should be kept in a cold, but sheltered spot, possibly a garage, and the root ball should be kept watered. When it is brought indoors it should again be kept watered. A live tree shouldn't be kept indoors for more than 10 days.

With the arrival of Epiphany, January 6, I finally admit that it is time to take the tree down. We have used it as a place to put a bird feeder, or we have just cut the branches off to use as mulch on the rhododendron bed. The branches help hold the snow during the winter and when the needles eventually fall off they are left as mulch for the acid loving rhodies. The naked branches go on the brush pile.

The snow break was intended as a practical planting and it has served us well. Being able to cut down our own Christmas tree has been a joyful bonus.

## Fun facts about Christmas trees:

- (1) The decorated tree can be traced back to the ancient Romans who decorated trees with small pieces of metal during Saturnalia, a winter festival in honor of Saturn, the god of agriculture.
- (2) An evergreen, the Paradise tree, was decorated with apples as a symbol of the feast of Adam and Eve held on December 24 during the Middle Ages.
- (3) The custom of the Christmas tree was introduced in the United States during the War of Independence by Hessian troops. An early account tells of a Christmas tree set up by American soldiers at Fort Dearborn, Illinois, the site of Chicago, in 1804. Most other early accounts in the United States were among the German settlers in eastern Pennsylvania.
- (4) Christmas trees have been sold commercially in the United States since about 1850.
- (5) The first retail Christmas tree retail lot in the United States was started in 1851 in New York by Mark Carr.
- (6) In 1856, Franklin Pierce, the 14th President of the United States, was the first President to place a Christmas tree in the White House.
- (7) Thomas Edison's assistant, Edward Johnson, came up with the idea of electric lights for Christmas trees in 1882.
- (8) Christmas tree lights were first mass produced in 1890.
- (9) President Coolidge started the National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on the White House lawn in 1923.





MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL

"This publication is supported in part by a grant from the Heath Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency."

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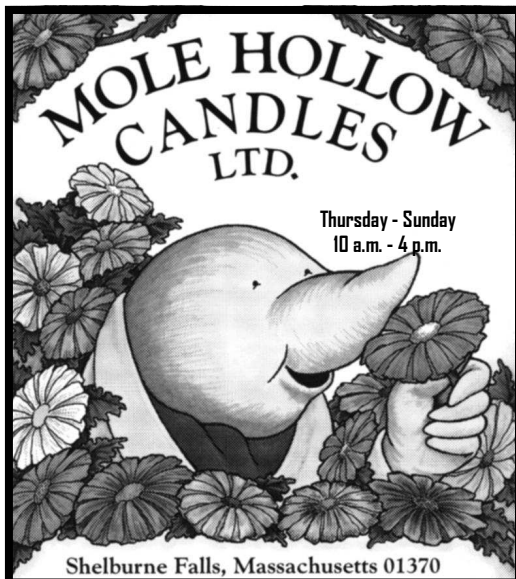
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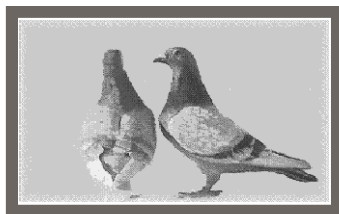
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## A Report from Owl Hill Loft, North Heath – Part 1



The domestic pigeon is a descendant of *Columba livia*, the rock dove. Other members of this family include the mourning dove, the turtledove, the wood pigeon, and the ill-fated passenger pigeon. The rock dove is even related to the extinct dodo bird.

Pigeons have been domesticated since the dawn of man. They delivered the results of the first Olympic in 776 B.C. and first brought news of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo over twenty-five hundred years later. However, they do have their detractors who refer to them as "flying rats."

At Owl Hill Loft we are interested only in the homing pigeon or, as it is so often called, the racing pigeon. They are athletes with superior capabilities who routinely fly over five hundred miles in a single day at speeds exceeding 60 miles per hour. The birds' innate and navigational abilities are legendary. If let go, they will always return home.

We, Esther and I, became interested in the homing pigeon some years ago, and, when I retired recently, decided to give it a try. We joined the Northwest Flyers Club. This group, originally designed to encourage young people, had expanded to involve adults. We meet once a month at a snowmobile clubhouse in Haydenville.

One of the highlights of the year is an auction, and, at our first auction, we purchased two highly regarded birds, a Bluebar and a Redcheck. As you can imagine, one is immediately on a huge learning curve, and the more one learns, there seems much more to learn. Proper nutrition, vitamins, medicines, and good care all come into play. We found that more nesting room was necessary and more cage room to make the increasing bird population comfortable. A female pigeon can lay two eggs six times a year. Our first great effort was a Bluebar Redcheck male cross, immediately named Eric the Redcheck. We were given two more Bluebars by Mary Ann from Southampton and two whites by Tim of Chesterfield. Our loft was growing. Within a week or so offspring have to be banded. One has to stay on top of this or it will become impossible to slip the rigid metal cylinder on to the cute little bird's leg. If the bird isn't banded with the proper year's band -no identity- no racing.

It soon became obvious that the new potential flyers would need to be separated from the breeding birds. So a regulation flying loft was constructed at the northeast corner of the barn. This needed to be well ventilated as no drafts can be tolerated. An aviary to allow access to fresh air and sunlight, flat perches, and a landing board with a one-way entry called a "Bob" were added.

The birds need to be comfortable, reasonably well fed, and regular bathing is a must. Then the training starts. I was in charge of that. Inasmuch as all races fly out of New York starting in the Albany area and moving North along the New York Thruway and Erie Barge Canal. I decided to concentrate on the Bennington, Vermont- Pittsfield quadrant. So with my traveling companions Eric the Redcheck, Whitely and Splash, and Maryann's two Bluebars, we flew from Eastern Summit, Searsberg Mountain, Whitcomb Summit, Prospect Mountain, Clarksburg, near the Williams College tennis courts, North Petersburg, just past Pownal, Petersburg, on Route 2, and finally Stephenstown, New York. I had a great tour of the countryside and the birds had some great flying. We were ready for flying competition 2006.

Two additional highlights of the year are old bird racing in the spring and new bird racing in the fall. On racing weekend, we meet at the clubhouse in Haydenville, register the flier by color, sex, and permanent band number. A rubber racing band is affixed to the leg, and the bird is loaded in its grouping. Sunday morning, the birds are trucked to New York and released at about eight o'clock en masse.

The one waits. When the first bird comes home, the numbered elastic band is quickly taken off its leg and placed in a tamper-proof clock where it is time-coded and stored for safekeeping. This exercise is repeated for each bird. Because lofts are located at varying distances from the starting point, a certified aerial survey is performed on each loft and its distance from the race's starting point is precisely calculated to the thousandth of a mile. The winner is the bird with the fastest average speed. This is all computerized so the results come quickly.

We enthusiastically went through the weekly drill. The Albany race we finished last. This was no surprise since we were up against some experienced owners who would be tough to beat. Schenectady, last. Amsterdam, last. Fultonville, last. This was getting pretty repetitious, but we held out hope for some improvement. One week Eric was back first, another week, Whitey or Splash; we were inconsistent.

The end of the season Fly for \$\$ Race, the Utica race, the farthest race, was upon us, and we had done no better than last place. However, hope springs eternal. Everything stayed the same; all requirements were met. It was a cloudy Sunday morning, a 50-mile-per-hour wind was blowing and at 12.25.10 Eric the Redcheck came scooting in, onto the landing board, through the Bob, racing band off, and into the clock.

We were anxious the next Monday evening at the clubhouse. One has no idea how others have done. All information was fed into the computer and Eric the Redcheck WON - 920.538 YARDS PER MINUTE - and we have the trophy and framed citation to prove it..

~ Richard and Esther Gallup



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# HEATH AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWS

## Fair Dates Set

The 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Heath Fair will take place on August 15, 16, and 17, 2008. After some discussion about whether or not to continue opening on Friday evening, the decision was made to stick with all three days. Next year we will make a decision based on our 2008 results.

## State Police Cell Phone Tower

The Agricultural Society has been in conversation with Pyramid, Inc. about the possibility of building a cell phone tower on the far northwestern corner of the Fairgrounds for the state police emergency communication system. The State Police hope to improve emergency communications in Western Massachusetts by adding 30 satellite dishes. In Heath and Colrain towers would need to be built.

Pyramid, Inc. is helping us assess the impact of a tower placed just past the gymkhana ring at the corner of the Fair property. This site would not interfere with any Fair activities or impede the flow of traffic. A photo simulation is being developed to help us see what the tower they have in mind might look like on the Fairgrounds. In October a balloon was floated at 120 feet. It was visible from Route 8A just past Number Nine Road, but nowhere closer to the Fairgrounds.

The Heath Fairgrounds is one of a couple of sites under consideration. At this point our conversations are very preliminary. No proposals or decisions of any kind have yet been made.

## Election of Officers

At the meeting on November 8 we re-elected the current slate of Heath Agricultural Society officers. They are: Co-Presidents, Gloria Fisher and Pam Porter; First Vice President, Shirley Tombs; Second Vice President, Bradley Tombs; Treasurer, Jan Carr; Recording Secretary, Christine O'Brien. Eric Sumner was elected Auditor.

## No December Meeting

There will be no meeting in December this year. The next Fair meeting will take place at the Heath School on January 10 at 7:00 p.m.

~ Pam Porter, Co-President

## Heath Fair Corn Poll Gives Clinton Decisive Lead

Several people have asked for the results of the "Corn Poll" held in the Agricultural Tent at the Heath Fair. The Corn Poll was based on the idea of a straw poll which is used as a method to obtain opinions to analyze the political climate of the voters in a rural area. Fair goers were given the opportunity to vote for their choice for the Presidential Election of 2008 by placing a kernel of corn into the canning jar that represented their favorite candidate.

Along with the instructions of how to cast their vote, voters were warned that: "The CORN poll was non-binding" and "Diebold nor any other security system were protecting their vote," and that "Anyone caught eating shards would be held for 24-hour observation." There was also a disclaimer: "There is not a kernel of truth to this poll. We are promoting that people will take stalk in their political system and get out and vote. We are all ears just waiting to hear the results. So, if we seem to be picking on the candidates, it's all in fun!"

Some of the comments left by voters were: *What an a-maizeing concept. Great Job!, If only the actual election were this democratic!/, This isn't as CORNY as it sounds--Great idea!/, It's great to be proud enough of your choice to take it public. I wish I could live in a country that voted with these results!/, I love it, nothing beats the great USA!/, How about ...none of the above on the ballot?/, You should have a jar for Bush for Impeachment, Washington is full of CORN!/, Never voted in my life, but this corn poll is great!/, A kernel of truth herein? This is a real cob job!/, Go Al Gore! and Awh shucks!*

A total of 399 people cast their votes. Here are the results:

Hillary Clinton (D) 121  
Barack Obama (D) 84  
John Edwards (D) 42  
Dennis Kucinich (D) 24  
Bill Richardson (D) 9  
Chris Dodd (D) 1  
Mike Gravel (D) 1  
Joe Biden (D) 0  
OTHER Democrats 22

Green Party 13  
Independents 4  
Libertarian Party 4  
Constitution Party 1

Rudy Giuliani (R) 16  
Mitt Romney (R) 13  
John McCain (R) 11  
Ron Paul (R) 10  
Fred Thompson (R) 8  
Duncan Hunter (R) 4  
Mike Huckabee (R) 3  
Newt Gingrich (R) 2  
Sam Brownback (R) 1

Tom Tancredo (R) 1  
Tom Thompson (R) 1  
OTHER Republicans 3

~ Bob Delisle  
Dee Brochu

Finance Committee Report

## Your Money at Work in Our Public Schools

Local K-12 school funding issues continue to dominate fiscal planning for Heath and other towns in Franklin County. While consolidation musings and administrative reorganization studies grab the headlines with attempts to solve these issues, little attention is paid to the Federal Government, certainly a major player in public education funding.

In the United States, powers not assigned to the Federal Government by the U.S. Constitution are reserved to the people or individual states. Since the U.S. Constitution does not mention education, it has been held that there is no federal Constitutional right to an education; hence, public education has always been under the general control of the states. HOWEVER, since the late nineteenth century the Federal Government has gradually expanded its role in public education much to the consternation of some citizens and congressmen who believe the U.S. government is overstepping its constitutional bounds. Several significant federal programs in the recent past typify this movement: Title IV Federal Financial Aid Programs for higher education; the mandated Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990, and the creation of the U.S. Department of Health, Education And Welfare in 1980. Major court cases and Equal Rights legislation continue to promote federal legislative programs, many of which proffer federal monies to help meet the requirements of the law. HOWEVER, states still have the primary role of implementing and administering federal programs (along with their own education initiatives) and, as often happens, the money promised doesn't always trickle down to the local level. Further, over time federal programs tend to be broadened to cover more situations and more people. This is quite true with IDEA (better known locally as SPED for special education), which has been amended/expanded several times. Complement the federal movement with state programs (Massachusetts had its own beginnings of IDEA in the early 1970s) and a very complex regulatory picture evolves. This report suggests that the growth of SPED costs is a primary reason for the difficulty that our local town governments have in keeping up with school tax assessments.

The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) recently prepared a position paper on SPED. Here are a few highlights:

- 1 Between FY90 and FY05 special education spending increased by 156.2% while regular education spending increased by only 88.7%.
- 2 In addition, expenditures on health services increased by 212.6%, largely due to the growing severity of the special education population.
- 3 Special education transportation costs increased 106% while the cost of regular education transportation increased only 66.9%.
- 4 The Chapter 70 foundation formula seriously underestimates the cost of special education and state aid to special education represents only a fraction of what

school districts are spending on special education.

- 5 When the costs of special education transportation are included in total spending on special education in the State, the Foundation Budget (FB) only covered 48.8% of total school district spending on special education in FY05. (Editor's note: the FB is the State's planning guide for allocating funds as perceived by the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) and the Legislature.)

These facts provide some idea of the fiscal problem caused by SPED. Further, Chapter 70 Aid calculations assume that LOCAL contributions cover 59% of the state-wide FB with state aid covering the remaining 41%. These percentages will vary in proportion to the municipality's wealth, but it is a reasonable guide for the Mohawk District. Prior to 2004 the proportion of Aid was reversed. MASS and other associations recently promoted a 50/50 partnership funding program between state and local governments, but it resulted in only part of the program being successful, i.e. a change in how the wealth of communities was computed from an all property tax arrangement to a property AND income formula. So far, that seems to be a more equitable concept in ascertaining a community's share of education support, but the combination of inadequate recognition of SPED costs and a formula weighted in favor of making local property taxpayers carry the greater share of public education does not bode well for the future. The growth of SPED certainly reflects the need of parents and children, but what appears to be absent is a realistic appreciation of the funding implications of the entitlement program on public education and the local taxpayer.

Federal funding for SPED comes in the form of state grant-in-aid. Early federal legislation provided for states to receive up to 40% of the national average expenditure for all pupils with a disability. (Subject to appropriation, of course!) In fact, federal allocations have never come close to meeting this 40 % goal; rather, evidence appears to be more in the 11% to 14% range. The National School Boards Association (NSBA) is currently urging Congress to increase special education funding from \$10.8 billion to \$13.3 billion, but that is unlikely to occur and the numbers do not come close to making an appropriate impact on what the legislation has decreed.

What does the local picture look like? In FY07 the Mohawk District instructional budget for regular education absent transportation costs was about \$4.4 million while SPED's budget was \$3.9 million, a 53/47 ratio. Total enrollment for Mohawk was 1221 of which 265 were SPED students or 21.7% of the total. Federal SPED grants were \$457,888 or 11.8% of the SPED budget. Mohawk also received \$259,955 in Title 1 monies, which are largely used to improve reading and math skills and another \$334,166 for a range of programs funded in part by State money. (Title 1 is also the main source of funding and implementing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).) Grant funds totaled \$1,052,009. Extrapolating this funding for Mohawk to the State and then the USA gives you an idea of the scope of federal involvement in public education! Grant funds are off-budget so-to- speak whereas Mohawk's assessments are based on the out-of-pocket estimated budget, so one doesn't easily see the effect of the grants on expenditures. (Admittedly,

("Finance Committee Report" continued on page 12)



(“Finance Committee Report” continued from page 11)

Superintendent Buoniconti has done a good job in preparing more transparent budgets.) The State’s Chapter 70 Education Aid program, which is based on its FB, does recognize SPED costs but limits the number of students its recognizes with an arbitrary 3.75% of total enrollment. Otherwise ALL students including SPED students are allocated dollar values in the different categories of the FB. Thus, the State does recognize SPED student needs, but it is difficult to see just how much. The DOE did recognize the SPED cost problem in FY01 when it started the Circuit Breaker program. It provided help in defraying the more expensive cases and in FY07 awarded Mohawk \$219,851 to offset SPED costs or about another 5.6%. The Circuit Breaker program now costs the State (and us) over \$200 million per year. The State’s FY07 Chapter 70 program provided \$3.5 billion to cities and towns. (For more information visit Google or Yahoo! and click on <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/>)

Heath’s average tax bill increased from \$2,200 in 2003 to \$3,151 in 2007, a 43.2% increase, much of which was due to increased school assessments after Chapter 70 Education Aid and Chapter 71 Transportation Aid were cut over 20% effective 2004. Exacerbated by the decreasing enrollment situation, the District has had difficulty adjusting to the cuts and still meet its education goals. Prior to 2004 the District’s expenditures above Required Net School Spending (NSS) was in the 9 to 13 percent range; since that time the range has been 18 to 26 percent. Also, Chapter 70 Aid has remained almost level funded at Mohawk due in part to lower enrollment, while costs keep rising. Obviously, local taxpayers have had to pick up the tab these past few years.

Spending for SPED has doubled at Mohawk over the last ten years and the State’s spending pattern is similar for an average 10% increase per year. SPED costs including transportation represented 24% of the budget in FY07. If SPED costs actually exceed the FB guidelines by nearly 50%, as is indicated by MASS’s report, there is great imbalance in the FB formula and, therefore, less aid from the State. Taken together with the Federal Government’s low funding rate, Mohawk falls far short of meeting a 40 to 50% goal of support. A rough calculation suggests it could require some \$1.2 million in additional aid to reach that point. (Editor’s note: Analyzing state, federal and local funding sources for school budgets is a complicated business.) Over the years local communities have supported Mohawk budgets, but it is obvious that the budget for FY08 has prompted “drawing a line in the sand” by some towns. The Town of Heath lucked out in FY08 with a lower Net Minimum Contribution to the District’s total assessment that kept our budget within reason. But the problems have not gone away; they could be eased considerably if the Federal Government (and again with our money) anted up their appropriate share of SPED support. Public education has been institutionalized with largely fixed costs meaning there is little opportunity for effecting economies of scale. Local studies of consolidation reflect that assertion. Maintaining sustainable public education budgets for the local taxpayer must involve more equitable distribution of funding resources.

How do we get more financial aid especially from the Feds? It could involve examining challenging legal issues between Massachusetts and the Federal Government considering the parties have

constitutional/legislative histories involving special education, but having joined hands for better or worse the funding problem(s) need to be addressed and soon. Otherwise, school budgets cannot be sustained by local taxpayers. The Heath Finance Committee, with support of the Selectboard, suggests the Mohawk Municipal Advisory Committee mount a campaign whereby our General Court representatives and Congressmen make an effort to bring fairness to financing special education.

~ Dave Howland, Chair  
Ned Wolf, Secretary  
Janis Carr  
Dave Gott  
Jeff Simmons

Sources: Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents  
U.S. Department of Education Budget Reports  
Massachusetts Department of Education Reports  
National School Boards Association  
Center for Special Education Finances  
Heath Board of Assessors  
Wikipedia  
Greenfield Recorder

## The Grange Movement

The early beginnings of the Grange Movement began basically as the American farmers protesting against railroad monopolies. The movement took its name from the National Grange or Patrons of Husbandry, a lodge founded by Oliver Hudson Kelley in 1867, and was strongest in the Midwestern states where the farmers were forced to combat the railroad powers by organizing anti-monopoly groups. They campaigned successfully for laws establishing state commissions to regulate railroads and warehouses. Although challenged, these laws were upheld by the US Supreme Court in 1876.

The Grange also organized cooperatives, stores, grain elevators, processing plants, and even farm equipment factories. However, the failure of these businesses caused the rapid decline of the movement in the Midwest in the 1870s. The National Grange, however, survived.

Effective lobbying efforts were undertaken early and remain a service to rural America. The education of rural residents was encouraged by the early Grange and dramatic improvements were made in rural schools. The birth of the Extension Service, Rural Free Delivery, and the Farm Credit System were largely due to Grange lobbying.

The Grange at all levels does not endorse candidates for public office nor contribute to their campaigns and is strictly non-partisan.

Grange leaders have realized that social interactions are important to rural residents and have encouraged educational events, dances, potluck suppers, town meetings, political rallies, as well as involvement in Junior Grange, 4-H, FFA, scouting, and Camp Fire groups.

The Grange motto “*In Essentials, Unity - In Non-essentials, Liberty, In All Things, Charity.*”

(A History of the Heath Grange #227 will appear in the next issue.)

~ Doug Stetson



## A Voyage to Botswana

Africa is not often in the news in any context other than that which details horrific acts against the innocent. We remember the genocide in Rwanda (thankfully in the past), Darfur killings, the failed state of Somalia, and Robert Mugabe's rape of what once was prosperous Zimbabwe.

My story is of a country that is the antithesis of this stereotype. Our family, in searching for a small scale wildlife experience, chose Botswana, which we visited in November. We did see cheetah, elephants, leopards, colorful birds, and many other forms of wildlife. Along the way we learned a bit about this country.

Botswana, a country the size of France or Texas, is a semi-arid agricultural nation with a sparse population of just over 1.8 million. At first, I did not even know where it was located. A trip to my atlas found it north of South Africa and east of Namibia, its neighbor bordering the South Atlantic Ocean.

It became a British protectorate in 1885. Being exceedingly poor, the Europeans barely left a footprint when the country was granted independence in 1966. At that time there were only six miles of paved roads, ten elementary schools, and two hospitals run by religious orders.

A remarkably peaceful election was held (the largely illiterate population voters placed colored symbols in envelopes). Seretse Khama became the first president. Diamonds were discovered in 1967 and a corporation was formed with operations run by DeBeers for a 40% interest with the government owning 60%. From then on the economy grew steadily at over 9% for the last forty years.

There have been three new presidents since 1966, all elected peacefully. The country survived upheavals in neighboring nations, particularly the Apartheid years in South Africa, revolutions in Angola, and repressive measures in Zimbabwe.

The government uses diamond revenue to benefit the people. 95% now have access to safe water (we visited one rural homestead where water in this parched land is piped over twenty miles from a deep well). 90% of children have been fully immunized at government expense. Primary school enrollment is 99%. There are 27 languages spoken here – but not the tribal strife seen in other African countries. A typical citizen speaks his tribal language, the national language (Setswana), and English. The most interesting group are the San or Bushmen made famous in the movie *The Gods Must Be Crazy*.

One person we met, "MT," a San, grew up as a child in a straw hut in the Okavango Delta, with illiterate parents and grandparents who subsisted as fishermen. The government gave the family a small house in a town where MT could attend school and a second home and plot of land nearby so that the family could become

farmers. Now assistant manager at a game lodge, trained in both Botswana and the United States (by the Disney Company), he is in line to be a full manager in the near future.

One interesting sidelight; the San and a related tribe, the Khoi, speak Khoisian, a language with a wide variety of clicking sounds, which, from a phonetic point of view, is the world's most complex language.

In terms of economic development, there are now hundreds of miles of paved roads, over 200 schools, many hospitals and rural clinics, and a well developed upscale tourist industry. The people we met were unreservedly friendly and justly proud of their country. We only wish the media would provide the kind of coverage to this success story that they give to the disasters.

~ Bob Viarengo



*Photographs courtesy of Bob Viarengo*

## Heath Historical Society

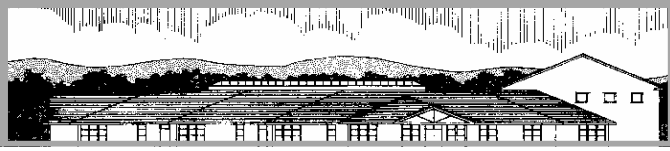
The Heath Historical Society's Annual Meeting and Supper were held on August 25, 2007. Over fifty members and guests attended and enjoyed a buffet supper of pork pie, baked by Teresa Peters and Alli Thane-Stetson, and a carrot-turnip casserole prepared by yours truly. Eileen Tougas furnished the blueberry crepe dessert. The Senior Center Committee did an excellent job with the meal and the atmosphere.

Highlights of the meeting were reports on last year's Fort Shirley Days and the people who took part including Michael Coe and his book narration and the erection of the new fence around Anna Norton's grave by Virginia Gary's Heath School class. Special mention was made of the raising of the British Flag on the site during the ceremonies. Curator Pegge Howland reported on the many contributions given to the Society's collection. Alarmed by the condition of the Center Schoolhouse's foundation, the Society has voted to divert funds for its repair, originally intended to redo the roof of Old Town House. I have been attending meetings of the newly formed Pioneer Valley Historical Society in Historic Deerfield in which over 25 societies are currently enrolled, including ours.

The following officers were elected: Vice President, Eric Grinnell (to fill out Jane deLeeuw's unexpired term); Treasurer, David Howland, 2 years; Secretary, Ned Wolf, 2 years, and Directors, Lois Buchiane, 3 years, Nina Marshall and Carol-Anne Eldridge, 1 year respectively.

Results of the Fair Raffle were announced and the winners were: Sydney Brown, the wool blanket; Jody Stetson, the wall hanging, and Janis Carr, the maple syrup.

Our speaker was Paul Truax of Chester, Vermont, who has studied the genealogy and history of the French and Indian War for over 40 years. He gave an interesting account of discovering his ancestors' roles in the war, one of whom was captured during the Deerfield Massacre. He is descended from those on both sides of the conflict. His telling of the war itself unfortunately was cut short by an intensifying thunderstorm. Many thanks to Paul whose theme coincided with last year's, that of our Fort Shirley that was erected because of the conflict. Paul had attended the raising of the British Flag.

**Heath School News**

By Anne Marie Mislak



I would like to highlight the Second Steps Program, which is used as part of Heath Elementary School's Social Curriculum. It is a program that helps schools and families encourage children to get along with others. The program teaches children to think about others' feelings, to solve problems cooperatively, and to manage their anger in a positive way. Each unit addresses one of these teachings listed above: Empathy, Impulse Control, and Anger Management. Empathy means identifying and understanding others' feelings in order to be a more caring person. Impulse Control helps students manage emotions by learning to slow down and think through options when faced with difficult situations or problems. The third unit helps students recognize, understand, and manage anger in a safe and constructive way because anger and also conflict are normal parts of our life.

Included in our philosophy, school improvement plan, and actually in all parts of our school life we try to create a culture that supports respect and care. The Second Steps Program is one of the tools we use to accomplish this. We also use pieces of many other Social Curricula such as Responsive Classroom. Second Steps is a research-based program with the majority of the research showing that school and the family are the two most important social and emotional learning environments for children. Thus, it is critical that we as educators take advantage of the opportunities in the school setting to teach positive social and emotional skills.

The classroom components include teaching cards that are a kick-off for discussion as part of morning meeting or class meeting time or when a specific issue arises in a particular classroom. Letters home to parents keep them informed of the lessons taught in each classroom. There is also a Family Overview Video, which can be signed out for viewing. It is 28 minutes in length, with more time spent if one stops the video and has family discussion time. Each classroom has a video as well as one in the office that can be signed out at any time.

Right now we have finished the unit on Empathy. I say "finished" but now this word (empathy) will be used over and over in developing the skills in the next two "units." Some of the teachers' meetings have also been devoted to the Second Steps Program. This was part of a check-in at least three times during the year to check on progress and evaluation of the different parts of the program.

**6th Annual Book Fair**

*Students had an opportunity to choose from a large array of books at the Friends of the Heath School Library Annual Book Fair that took place on November 15, at the Heath Elementary School.*

**Students Take Part in Card Project**

Anne and Ernie Marwick, part-time residents of Mohawk Estates, solicited the help of Heath School's third and fourth grade students to write Christmas cards to military men and women who will be spending the holidays in military hospitals recovering from injuries. With guidance from their teacher, Jorie Maccloud, the classroom of seventeen children presented the Marwicks with nearly one hundred cards filled with inspirational and encouraging messages.



## Heath Elementary School Parent-Teacher Partnership News

Fall is always a busy time for most of us and especially so here at the Heath School. We kicked off the year with our major Fall Fund-raiser - the Cherrydale Gift Catalog - and raised over \$1,500 towards enrichments! Thanks to all who participated, placing orders for holiday gifts and wrap. (If you missed out this year, mark your calendars for next, as we usually sponsor a fund-raiser of this type in September).

Our Heath Town-Wide Tag Sale - held on the Town Common this year - was a great success. We offered baked goodies and hot drinks, in addition to pre-owned treasures. A fun time was had by all. As you sort through/clean out your cellars and barns, consider setting aside items for this PTP fund-raiser for next year (this may become an annual event!).

Finally, in the fund-raising department, we again offered the wildly popular Original Artwork program. Our students' artwork is transferred onto many items such as tote bags, note cards, and pillowcases, making for unique holiday gifts.

Money raised from these Fall Fund-raisers is being earmarked this year for an upcoming Artists-in-Residence program with Bamidele Drummers and Dancers. This high-energy performance and teaching group will spend a week at the School this winter introducing and exploring the music and dance of West Africa, the Caribbean, and Brazil in a highly interactive way with all our students. The workshops will culminate in an evening performance open to the Heath Community. Watch for publicity detailing when and where, or call the School after January 1 for information.

Our After-School Enrichment program has been expanded this year. Each month we will be offering a special workshop tied to the seasons or holidays. October featured pumpkin decorating/carving, in November a "Dreamcatcher" workshop - a Native American tradition, and in December we'll once again offer our popular Gingerbread House Activity.



*Photograph courtesy of Lorena Loubksy-Lonergan*

Our Halloween Party was a lot of fun and well-attended. This year we invited townsfolk for "Tailgate Trick or Treating," and although we had rain, many stalwart Heathans turned out for the festivities: the movie, "Scooby Doo Monsters Unleashed," ghost stories for young and old and, of course, trick or treating.

Thanks to those townsfolk who helped make it a special and spooky night!

We invite participation from our larger Heath community at all our events, whether that be at sporting events - the Heath/Rowe soccer teams had a very active, well-supported season, or our monthly Family Movie Nights, traditionally held the third Friday of the month at the School at 7:00 p.m. On this note, we would like to extend a special invitation to all Heathens to attend a PTP-sponsored annual holiday performance, this year featuring the renowned "No Strings Marionettes" from Vermont performing "Scrooge: A Christmas Carol" at the School on Monday, December 3rd at 10:00 a.m. We look forward to seeing you there!

*~ Dana Blackburn*

2007-2008 Officers: Dawn Holden, Chair Fund-raising; Carin Burnes, Chair, Enrichments; Dana Blackburn, Chair, School-Community Relations; Valerie Lively, Secretary; Robin Jenkins, Treasurer

## Democracy in Action

What better way to learn about democracy than to participate in it. Over the past few weeks the children in our school have been learning about our democratic government and its constitution, by creating school rules. We started by gathering as a school to share both our hopes and dreams for the coming year and the classroom rules. Each class then voted on two delegates to send to a Congress with the goal of creating school rules that would encompass the rules of every class. The Congress (Riley Phelps, Eric Shattuck, Haley Rode, Matthew Lively, Catherine Charlton, Timmy Burnes, Hope Lively, and Colton Yezeirski) worked together and created a list of rules that they felt would both honor the class rules and take care of our community as a whole. They then presented these proposed rules to their classmates and asked for suggestions. As a result, the Congress presented four rules to be voted on by the school community.

On Voting Day, community members went to the polls to vote on the rules as put forth by our Congress. Under the supervision of our election officials, (Christopher Graves, Mahalia Dean, and Eddie Muenkel) the children cast their ballots using the Town's ballot box. When the polls closed, votes were counted and recounted by our ballot counters (Timothy Burnes, Max Schnorr, Nat Boyd-Owens, Geannie Heil, Charles Dean, Catherine Charlton, Sovahn Crawford, and Mac Sloan-Anderson). We are happy to announce that as a result of our election, the following rules were overwhelmingly endorsed.

### Heath School Rules

We, the people of the Heath Elementary School, in order to have a safe and friendly place to play and learn, do ordain and establish these rules for the School.

- Treat other people the way you want to be treated back.
- Take care of the school and the things in it.
- Treat yourself with care.
- Be thoughtful of the plants and animals in our environment.



### Heath Fire News

In my last column I forgot to mention the new members of our department, so please welcome aboard, Justen Brooks, Joe Sonntag, Cory Inman, and Nathan Wynne!

Just a reminder to all, since the clocks have been changed it would be a great idea to change those batteries in your smoke alarm if you have not done so and it would be a great idea to change the one in your Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarm if it has one. Do you have a CO Alarm in your house? Could make a Christmas present for those who do not have one.

The Department has assisted our neighboring towns with fires on both sides of the state border. Department members have received updated training in CPR and AED use. We would like to thank VILLAGE AMBULANCE of Williamstown for loaning us their AED trainer. Soon we will be doing an updated first responder program. All of this will be done in-house. In addition several members are scheduled to attend a two-day training session on using self-contained breathing apparatus in search and rescue scenarios. We have also posted house numbers at homes in town. This was done through a grant with the Council on Aging and to them a big THANK YOU.

Now for a New Year's wish – a new rescue truck. The rescue, a 1985 converted military ambulance, is the workhorse of the department responding to virtually all calls in town. It is the primary unit for medical aids and being 22 years old has seen better days. We are searching for a newer one which can meet the department needs and give us the ability to carry additional equipment to serve you better.

An unexpected gift came from the U.S. House of Representatives when that body politic passed the Heroes Earning Assistance Relief Tax (HEART) Act. This act exempts up to \$360 from federal income taxes benefits paid to volunteers and any property tax benefits received (some states allow municipalities to give volunteers reductions in property taxes payable). The Act, HR 3997, now moves on to the U.S. Senate's Committee on Finance for consideration.

*Firefighters killed in the line of duty since  
September 2007 – 17.7.*

*Volunteers accounted for 13 of those deaths..*

As we approach the holiday season, we would like to remind people about candle safety. 17,000 plus house fires were caused by candles in 2004 resulting in 1500 injuries and estimated 200 dead and \$200,000,000 in property damage. Candles are great to use but as we see by these numbers they can be very destructive. So here are a few tips.

- Never leave a candle unattended and make sure it is out of reach of children and pets.
- Ideally they should be in a sturdy nonflammable holder that is capable of holding the wax.
- Never use candles on or near real Christmas trees.
- Keep the wicks short about 1/4" and if a flame gets too high, extinguish it and re-trim the wick. During a power outage use a flashlight instead of walking with a candle. Lastly, you could consider buying a flameless candle

which uses batteries. I haven't seen one yet but I am told the flame is realistic and is indistinguishable from a real one.

*~ Jeff Simmons*

## Carroll Stowe Memorial Tractor Day



*Photographs courtesy of R. McGahan*

For years, one of Heath's favorite citizens, Carroll Stowe, would organize an annual, and, in recent years, semiannual, gathering of like-minded people at the Heath Fairgrounds, to display, look at, and talk about old tractors and farm equipment. His name for this gathering was the "Old Tractor Show and Swap Meet."

Although in my memory little was swapped but stories, this was enough, as Carroll usually had a fire going in his portable brush burner, making it an attractive place to linger. It was well that he had the fire, as his recent shows were plagued by inclement weather. If it wasn't rain, it was fog, wind, and, in May of 2002, six inches of snow.

This didn't deter Carroll. He enjoyed people, and he enjoyed his show. Once asked if the weather didn't dismay him at times he replied in his not-so-quiet voice with what I think summed up his philosophy of life: "Hey, it'll be what it'll be." And it always was.

After Carroll passed, his show lay dormant. During the summer of 2007, Dohn Sherman and I had several discussions about reviving it, and on October 20, 2007, we held what we hope can become an annual event, the First Carroll Stowe Memorial Tractor Day.

Although there was much interest in participating, an unfortunately short notice prohibited many people from doing so, due to prior commitments. Dohn, John Severance, Matt Lively, and I all brought one or more tractors to display, and Dohn drove his John Deere G with trailer from Rowe and offered hayrides. As was the custom at Carroll's shows, Bob and Donna Tanner offered food and beverages for sale at the food booth.

All in all, the day was enjoyable, and provided opportunities to meet new friends as well as remember old ones.

*~ Robert McGahan*



*Hayride on Hosmer Road. Ben Sherman  
in left foreground.*

## Heath Business Directory

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**Fred Burrington**  
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**Dave Cote Builders**  
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337-4705

**Robert Delisle**  
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337-5716

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337-4460

**Jerry Ferguson**  
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337-4317

**Earl M. Gleason**  
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**Heath Brook Studio**  
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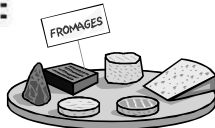
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***It's Your Health and Safety***

By Sheila Litchfield, RN, BSN

## The Health Benefits of Gratitude and Thankfulness



Certified Occupational Health Nurse

Psychology Professor Robert Emmons of the University of California-Davis and Michael E. McCullough of the University of Miami conducted research on the health benefits of gratitude. They say people who remember to give thanks every day feel better, have more energy, are better liked, and are more successful. So even if the holidays get a little stressful with family, don't forget to count your blessings.

***"A noble person is mindful and thankful of the favors he receives from others."***

*~ the Buddha*

Religions and philosophies have long embraced gratitude as an indispensable manifestation of virtue, and an integral component of health, wholeness, and well-being. Through conducting highly focused, cutting edge studies on the nature of gratitude, its causes, and its consequences, Emmons and McCullough hope to shed new scientific light on this important concept. Although their research is currently ongoing, several important and interesting findings relative to psychological and physical well-being are emerging:

Those who kept gratitude journals on a *weekly* basis exercised more regularly, reported fewer physical symptoms, felt better about their lives as a whole, and were more optimistic about the upcoming week compared to those who recorded hassles or neutral life events (Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

Participants who kept gratitude lists were more likely to have made progress toward important personal goals (academic, interpersonal, and health-based) over a two-month period compared to subjects in the other experimental conditions.

A daily gratitude intervention (self-guided exercises) with young adults resulted in higher reported levels of the positive states of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness, and energy compared to a focus on hassles or a downward social comparison (ways in which participants thought they were better off than others).

Participants in the daily gratitude condition were more likely to report having helped someone with a personal problem or having offered emotional support to another, relative to the hassles or social comparison condition.

In a sample of adults with neuromuscular disease, a 21-day gratitude intervention resulted in greater amounts of high energy positive moods, a greater sense of feeling connected to others, more optimistic ratings of one's life, and better sleep duration and sleep quality, relative to a control group.

Grateful people report higher levels of positive emotions, life satisfaction, vitality, optimism, and lower levels of depression and stress. The disposition toward gratitude appears to enhance pleasant feeling states more than it diminishes unpleasant emotions. Grateful people do not deny or ignore the negative aspects of life.

People with a strong disposition toward gratitude have the capacity to be empathic and to take the perspective of others. They are rated as more generous and more helpful by people in their social networks (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002).

Those who regularly attend religious services and engage in religious activities, such as prayer and reading religious material, are more likely to be grateful. Grateful people are more likely to acknowledge a belief in the interconnectedness of all life and a commitment to and responsibility to others (McCullough et al., 2002).

Grateful individuals place less importance on material goods; they are less likely to judge their own and others' success in terms of possessions accumulated; they are less envious of wealthy persons; and are more likely to share their possessions with others relative to less grateful persons.

***"Gratitude is the moral memory of mankind."***  
*~ George Simmel*

### Distinguishing Between Gratefulness and Indebtedness

In a study, people who write about being indebted to others report higher levels of anger and lower levels of appreciation, happiness, and love, relative to people who write about being grateful to others (Gray & Emmons, 2000).

The experience of indebtedness is less likely to lead to a desire to approach or make contact with others relative to an experience of gratefulness. Thus, indebtedness tends to be an aversive psychological state that is distinct from gratitude.

Hope you all have a happy, healthy, and joy-filled holiday season.

*(The above excerpts from an article by Robert Emmons, summarizing his current research)*

## Selectboard's Report

### Meeting Schedule

The Board has resumed meeting on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. in Sawyer Hall. Meetings will be every other week.

### All Boards Meeting

The Selectboard hosted an "All Boards Meeting" on November 6 at the Charlemont Inn. Coffee and dessert were served before the business part of the evening began.

The various town boards shared information on the projects and issues they have been working on over the past year. The Selectboard reviewed important dates on the town calendar with the meeting attendees, including budget hearings and annual report submissions. Official records retention and archives were discussed along with a review of the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law. Requirements and expectations for serving on town boards and committees were summarized. Handouts on these topics were distributed to all in attendance. The meeting was well attended and the Board received very positive feedback.

### Three-Town Landfill

The Three-Town Landfill Committee voted to award a contract for post-closure water quality monitoring to Stantec, formerly known as Dufresne-Henry, at a meeting held at the Hawlemont School on October 30. A contract for this year's mowing was awarded to Lively Caretaking. Maintenance issues regarding an abutter's domestic water filtration system were also discussed.

### School Issues

The Heath School Focus Group will present its findings at the December 3rd Selectboard meeting that will be held at the Heath Elementary School. The group has worked very hard for months on developing models of an independent Heath Elementary School.

The Heath members of the newly formed Rowe/Heath Education Exploratory Committee have met to get organized but have not had a meeting with their counterparts in Rowe. Their charge is to investigate the potential for collaboration between the schools and the possible benefits of those collaborations to both schools and towns.

### Municipal Energy Management Contracting

Heath is participating in an effort by the FRCOG to hire the services of an Energy Services company to do Energy Management Services for Franklin County municipalities and school districts. Energy audits will be done on all town-owned facilities and a plan for conservation or alternative energy will be produced and implemented. The contractor must guarantee that the cost of the improvements will be offset by the energy cost savings.

### Appointments

Sheila Litchfield has been serving as Temporary Town Nurse for the purposes of providing the annual flu vaccina-

tion program. The Board has been receiving applications for the permanent part-time position. A review of the applicants will be coming up soon.

Many thanks are due to Sheila for stepping in to make sure the shots are available to those in town who need them.

### Whittemore Spring

The landowners have agreed to allow the town to have access to do excavating work on the spring supplying the Whittemore Spring. Excavation work to restore the spring is underway. Periodic testing of the water will be required by the State for the spring to remain in operation.

### Heath Online

Take some time to visit the Town's Web site at [www.townofheath.org](http://www.townofheath.org). You'll find Selectboard meeting minutes, school information, and much more. The Web site is being updated. All comments and suggestions are welcome. You may address them to Gloria Fisher at [towncoordinator@townofheath.org](mailto:towncoordinator@townofheath.org). You may contact the Board at [BOS@townofheath.org](mailto:BOS@townofheath.org). Send messages to any board or individual via the e-mail address, or visit the Heath Web site.

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

## Flu Clinic



Sheila Litchfield, RN, administers a flu shot to Dianne Grinnell in the nurse's office at the Heath Senior Center.





## Library Lines

### Library Activities

By Donald Purington



Beautiful books and illustrations is the theme of our displays in the library in December. The display case has several books from our Archive Collection with gold gilt lettering and illustrations on the front covers and spines. Displayed on the walls are color copies of illustrations from *Four and Twenty Toilers*, a book of verses and pictures published in the early 1900s. The children's bulletin board has illustrations and rhymes from an alphabet book. Also on the board are copies from a 1925 book of haiku titled *Little Pictures of Japan*. Thank you to Helen Mackie and Jane deLeeuw for their work on this project.

Children (infants to age 5) are invited to join us with a parent for Preschool Story Hour. Lyra Johnson will host a fun hour of stories, crafts, and a snack from 10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. on the following Fridays at the library:

- December 7 & 14
- January 11 & 25
- February 8 & 15
- March 7 & 21
- May 2, 16, & 30



Photographs courtesy of Lyra Johnson

Story Hour is supported by a grant from *Community Action!* and by the Friends of the Heath Free Public Library. If the Mohawk School District cancels or delays school due to inclement weather, story hour will be canceled.

Preschool Story Hour hosted a Halloween Party on October 30. Over 30 children and parents attended, many in costume. Lyra Johnson set the mood with gently spooky Halloween decorations and by reading a few books. The children then played games (Pin the Face on the Pumpkin), did a craft project, and had a snack. Fortunately the weather was mild and sunny, allowing a few of the activities to spill out onto the front porch of Sawyer Hall.

The library will hold its Holiday Raffle from December 3 through December 21. Prizes include books (*Chat* by Archie Mayor, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* by J. K. Rowling, *Baby Bear, Baby Bear, What Do You See?* by Eric Carle, and *Who Will Sing a Lullaby?* by Dee Lillegard), a CD (*Mozart: Musical Masterpieces*), a Family Game Center

which includes nine board games and one block stacking game, a fly tying kit, and a dog biscuit kit with recipes and three mini cookie cutters. Raffle tickets will cost \$1 each or 6 for \$5, or you may receive one raffle ticket for each non-perishable food item donated to the Good Neighbors Food Pantry. A food collection box will be in the library. Good luck!

#### New at the Library:

**Adult Fiction Books:** *Chat* by Archer Mayor, *Set Sail for Murder* by Carolyn Hart, *Now & Then* by Robert B. Parker, *Home to Holly Springs* by Jan Karon, *Playing for Pizza* by John Grisham, *You've Been Warned* by James Patterson, and *Breakfast With Buddha* by Roland Merullo.

**Adult Nonfiction Books:** *Rustic Garden Furniture and Accessories* by Daniel Mack, *Days of Destiny: Crossroads in American History* edited by James M. McPherson, *Heath Center Historic District* by Bonnie Parson and the Heath Historic Commission, and *Dog Years: a Memoir* by Mark Doty.

**Books on CD:** *The Outermost House* by Henry Beston, *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen, and coming soon: *Bridge of Sighs* by Richard Russo.

**Books on Tape:** *The First Partner: Hillary Rodham Clinton* by Joyce Milton.

**Young Adult Fiction Books:** *The Keepers Book 1: A Wizard Named Nell* by Jackie Koller, *The Chicken Dance* by Jacques Couvillon.

**Young Adult Nonfiction Books:** *The Totally TEA-rific Tea Party Book* by Tanya Napier, and *Daring Book for Girls* by Andrea J. Buchanan.

**Children's Picture Books:** *The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds (the text is in both print and Braille), and *Llama, Llama Red Pajama* by Anna Dewdney.

**DVDs:** *Ratatouille*, *The King of Masks*, *Gosford Park*, and *An Unfinished Life*

**Videos:** *The Money Pit*, *Dave*, and *The Gods Must be Crazy*

## Milestones

**Muriel A. Schatz Giard**, of Greenfield, died on November 13, 2007. Born in Greenfield on June 4, 1921, she was the daughter of William and Margaret Dunlop Schatz.

She worked as a switchboard operator at Franklin Medical Center for 35 years, and, after retiring, for the Greenfield Police Department as a school crossing guard.

Her husband of 56 years, Wilfred Giard, died in 2000. She is survived by a son, **Christopher Giard** of Heath; two granddaughters, Kristina and Kelly Giard, and her brother, William Schatz, of Jupiter, FL.

Memorial contributions may be made to Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society, 163 Montague Road, Leverett, MA 01054.

## Requiescat in pace

Born on November 5, 2007, **Daria Louise Ayers**, daughter of Carl and Emily Ayers of Dunmore, PA; granddaughter of **Hilma Sumner** of Heath and Kevin and Carrie Bates of Canton, NY; niece of **Ruth Ayers** of Heath, and grandniece of Charlene Churchill of Ellsworth, ME.

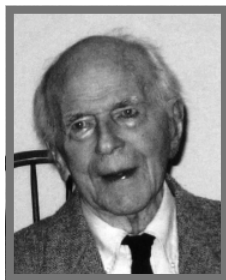
## Heath People in the News

**Margaret (Pegge) E.C. Howland**, Curator of the Archibald MacLeish Collection at Greenfield Community College, has been selected for inclusion in the recently published 62<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Who's Who in America*.

The collection of almost 14,000 items that Pegge maintains was begun in 1974 by a group of educators at the college with Mr. MacLeish's whole-hearted approval. It is open to the public every Wednesday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., and by appointment.

Pegge was Director of the Greenfield Community College Library for 22 years, retiring in 1990. She is the author of the *Descriptive Catalog of the Archibald MacLeish Collection* and the *Descriptive Catalog of the Books and Periodicals in the Heath Historical Society Collection* as well as co-author of *Archibald MacLeish: An Annotated Bibliography*.

She was president of the Heath Historical Society for ten years and is presently its curator. In addition, she does volunteer work in the Historic Deerfield Library and Curatorial Department.



Photograph courtesy of Hazel Porter Maitland

On October 16, **Alastair Maitland** was honored by Brown University at a reception given in his honor in recognition of his gift to the John Hay Library of a number of letters written by British author and playwright, George Bernard Shaw, to Mary Hamilton, the late Betty Maitland's Aunt Tim.

Mary Hamilton was one of nine children of the Anglican Archbishop of Ottawa. She had gone to London where she was an actress, appearing in several of Shaw's plays.

From a five-page letter, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1918:

*My dear Mary Hamilton*

*When I talk of God (if I ever do) I am not thinking of the white bearded old gentleman with the frightfully short temper and vindictive nature who was the bogey of our childhood. As to all that I am a square-toed mid- nineteenth-century atheist. But I am not in the least a materialist. There is a divine spark in you and me which drives us to do all sorts of things that have no sense as far as our own immediate personal interests are concerned, including the risk of death in terrible ways. There is nothing mysterious about it; it is visibly at work everywhere, and is the driving force that has made life evolve from a speck of slime in a ditch to mankind, which seems to be its best so far. It makes all sorts of mistakes from fleas to tigers and from pain and fear to greed and pugnacity; but throughout it all it seems to be following a steady purpose, and that purpose is the increase of power and the increase of knowledge.*

**Heath author Sam Michel** has had a novel, *Big Dogs & Flyboys*, recently published by Southern Methodist University Press.



Photograph courtesy of Ann Rocchi

**Amelia Rocchi**, daughter of **Ann and Frank Rocchi** of Heath, graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor of arts degree in Communications from Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island. Her concentration was in Public Relations with minors in Marketing and Italian. She studied abroad in Florence, Italy in the spring of her junior year and is listed in *Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges*. Amelia is now Development Coordinator for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts.

## Craft Fair



Gloria Fisher, far right, speaking with crafter Dolly Churchill at the Holiday Craft Fair on November 3 in the Community Hall..

## Seeking Representative

The LEC (Local Education Council) is seeking a Community Representative. The LEC meets on a monthly basis, usually the first Thursday of the month from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.. The Community Member cannot be a staff member or a parent at the school. The purpose is to have input from the community in which the school is located. The LEC has parents and staff members who are also on the Council. The Local Educational Council is a representative, school building-based group that advises the principal in adopting educational goals for the school, in reviewing the annual budget, and in formulating the school improvement plan..

Councils originated with the Education Reform Act of 1993 to serve as a vehicle for teachers, parents, and community to become more involved in their local schools and have a role in shaping policies and programs for the school.

Ned Wolf is one of our Community Representatives. If you have any questions, he is always willing to discuss with you. If you are interested, please call the school at 337-5307.

### Heath's Monthly Precipitation (inches)

(Observed by Heath School Staff and Students)

	<u>Rain</u>
From September 11, 2007	2 ¼ "
October	6 ¼ "
To November 10	¾ "

#### In this reporting period:

The past two months in general have been on the mild side with not a lot of rain. We had a low of 22 degrees on the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> of October. Thankfully, the only thing we got from "Noel" on November 3 was some light wind. The first ten days of November brought with them some chilly mornings. Our first widespread dusting of snow came on the morning of November 10.

~ Timothy Lively

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## Community Calendar

### December 2007

- December 03** - No Strings Marionette Performance, *Scrooge – A Christmas Carol*, Heath School, 10:00 a.m.
- December 04** - **HAPPY HANUKKAH!**
- December 05** - Schools' Early Release Day, Heath School, 12:45 p.m.
- December 06** - Senior Luncheon, Community Hall-Senior Center, 11:45 a.m.  
PTP Meeting, Heath School, 3:30 p.m.
- December 07** - Preschool Story Hour, Heath Library, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.
- December 14** - PTP Family Movie Night, Heath School, 7:00 p.m.  
Preschool Story Hour, Heath Library, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.
- December 18** - Financial Aid Night for high school seniors and parents, MTRHS Cafeteria, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
- December 20** - Senior Luncheon and Christmas Party, Community Hall-Senior Center, 11:45 a.m.
- December 21** - Full Day of School
- December 24** - Holiday vacation begins
- December 25** - **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

### January 2008

- January 01** - **New Year's Day - HAPPY NEW YEAR!!**
- January 02** - Back to school
- January 03** - Senior Luncheon, Community Hall-Senior Center, 11:45 a.m.
- January 10** - Heath Agricultural Society Meeting, Heath School, 7:00 p.m.
- January 11** - Preschool Story Hour, Heath Library, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.
- January 17** - Senior Luncheon, Community Hall-Senior Center, 11:45 a.m.
- January 17+18** - Semester Exams, MTRHS
- January 21** - **MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY** – No school
- January 22** - Schools' In-service Day – No school
- January 23** - Schools' Second Semester begins
- January 25** - Preschool Story Hour, Heath Library, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.





*For last year's words  
belong to last year's language  
and next year's voice.  
And to make an end  
is to make a beginning.*

*T.S. Eliot from "Little Gidding"  
(1888-1965)*

**Happy New Year to all!**

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