



HEATH HERALD

Heath's First Newspaper

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Heath School Happenings



Heath Herald

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Heath Union Church News

As you read this issue our Easter Services are over. We joyfully returned upstairs to our Sanctuary on Palm Sunday. We have a very special reason to be thankful as we worship in the bright new colors superbly painted and polished by Mike Platek and his workers. The Congregation thanks him for his ability to maintain the true historical aura of the Church.

Recently an evening talk by Pastor Grant on his Holy Land trip was enjoyed as was a movie night March 30. On April 27 at 5:00 p.m. in the Lower Level of the Church there will be a travelog on Iceland. All are welcome.

As always:

Adult Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.

Sunday Worship, 10:00 a.m.

Bible Study, Thursday, 6:00 p.m. at Dot Sessions' home

The Pastor's office hours are Thursdays from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. He can be reached at the Church at 337-4019 or at home 413-648-9077

~The Deacons

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Green Thoughts**Rhubarb**

By Pat Leuchtman



One year a friend, just returned from London, gave me a copy of the *Financial Times* that contained an article about rhubarb. Rhubarb season comes earlier in England, but it is one of the first harvests here in New England and the article had all kinds of fascinating information. Robin Lane Fox, *Financial Times* columnist, explained that rhubarb has been cultivated for about 4500 years. There are records of rhubarb being used medicinally in China since 2700 BC. It was actually the roots that were considered valuable as a purgative and cathartic. It even became important as an export to Russia and England. It was so important that when the Chinese became angry with these countries in 1759 the Emperor Qianlong forbid the export of rhubarb. Fortunately, long before that, Marco Polo, the Venetian traveler (1254-1324), had brought rhubarb back to Venice where it was valuable in the pharmacopeias of the day.

That Chinese rhubarb, *R. palmatum*, is rarely grown in the west today. Its medicinal properties are not needed. It is another variety of rhubarb, *R. officinale*, that became known as pie plant and that I had always thought of as practically being invented in New England. In fact, there is a record of a Maine gardener getting some roots from England in about 1790. By 1822 it was so popular that it was sold routinely in food markets. I always think of it as a spring tonic. Certainly a trip out to the rhubarb patch on a still cool spring morning can get the blood flowing, and rhubarb's tart flavor wakes up the taste buds.

Any number of catalogs sell rhubarb roots including the local Nourse Farms in South Deerfield. Rhubarb is a long-lived and very hardy plant which should be planted in soil well fertilized with rotted manure and compost. The pH should be between 6 and 6.8 for best production. Many people get their rhubarb plants from a friend who is thinning their patch. If the leaves seem to be getting smaller that is usually an indication that the plants are getting overcrowded.

I actually got my rhubarb plants from a neighbor who had thrown rhubarb root thinnings into their huge pile of autumn leaves. I went over one spring day to harvest some of those leaves for my compost pile and found beautiful healthy roots, already showing new growth and perfectly ready for planting.

Because the roots will increase in size and because the leaves are so large, roots should be planted three feet apart; the top of the root should be just level with the soil. Every spring I spread compost over the rhubarb patch, and I do the same in the fall when the plants have died down.

There is a controversy about whether the flower stalk should be cut down or not. One theory is that it steals energy from the plant. Another theory is that it doesn't make any difference, and that the flower is just another attraction in addition to the handsome foliage. Take your pick. The stalks are not really considered medicinal except in the sense of a spring

tonic, but it must be remembered that the leaves contain oxalic acid and are poisonous. It is not likely that a toddler or young child would find them delicious after the first bite, or that anyone would stew them up as a mess of greens, but remember - rhubarb leaves are poisonous.

To harvest, wait until the leaves are fully developed. Grab the stalk near the root and pull slightly to the side and break it off. Cutting with a knife can lead to rot. Don't harvest more than half the stalks, and stop the harvest by midsummer. Then take those red and green stalks into the kitchen for some good eating.

First, there is just plain rhubarb sauce. A very general recipe is all you really need. Take a potful of 1- inch pieces of rhubarb with lots of sugar and a cup or so of water. Bring to a boil for 5 minutes. If you wish you can also add the juice and grated rind of one orange. Refrigerate over night. Another popular sauce is rhubarb strawberry sauce. I usually just toss a package of frozen strawberries into the hot rhubarb sauce and cook them together for a minute or two.

Hawley-ite Tinky Weisblat, author of *The Pudding Hollow Cookbook*, suggests rhubarb fritters. She says that if you dip inch-long pieces of rhubarb into a fritter batter and deep fry them, the rhubarb softens in about the time it takes for the batter to brown. Then it is just like biting into a hot jelly donut.

Fans of *The Prairie Home Companion* are familiar with their "Be-Bop-A-Re-Bop Rhubarb Pie," so I will take this occasion to give my favorite pie recipe, adapted from *Easy as Pie* by Susan G. Purdy.

Quick and Creamy Rhubarb Pie

Make a thick custard batter. Beat together ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar, ¼ cup packed dark brown sugar, 1/3 cup flour, ¼ teaspoon nutmeg, a pinch of salt, ½ cup heavy cream, 1 egg, and ¼ teaspoon almond extract. This can be made several hours ahead and refrigerated until needed.

Take 4 cups of rhubarb cut into one-inch pieces and toss with 2 tablespoons of sugar. Set aside while making your favorite pastry crust for a 10-inch pie. Shape a high fluted edge to hold in the custard. Moisture proof the shell by brushing on beaten egg yolk.

Put the rhubarb pieces in the pie shell, and pour the custard batter over all. Bake in a preheated 425 degree oven for 30 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake 30 more minutes or until top is browned and crackled. Serve warm.

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*Wild Ramblings*

Reflections on Water



By Bill Lattrell

On this November day I find myself on the southeast side of a steep hill deep in the woods. I am staring at a near vertical wall of rock that emerges from the leaf-littered hillside. From my position I can see one side and the face of the outcrop of schist rock. Schist is a metamorphic rock formed eons ago under extreme and intense pressure and heat. It is a well-plated rock, meaning there are clear sections with cracks that can easily be identified by the most casual observer. In this area the rock's plating is tilted at a forty-five degree angle, the highest point of each plate being on the southeast side.

The rock is not without life. Lichen and moss grow along weathered horizontal cracks that give the wall side-to-side stripes of green and white. These stripes are broken where water leaks out of the rock and drips down the face indicating years and years of constant discharge. The water leaks out of the rock in several different areas and collects together in one shallow pool at the base of the ledge; from there it begins a journey downhill in a southeasterly direction. The water is clear, clean, and as vibrant as life itself.

For reasons only known to my subconscious, I decide to follow the water as it weaves its way down this steep hillside. It is a foolish mission as, at some point, I will have to climb back up this steep hill. Not being able to resist the temptation of even the smallest adventure, I follow my curiosity and the streamlet that falls down the hillside

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Time is a difficult concept to master. The human version of time is based on planetary movements. One day is the time it takes for the earth to do one complete turn on its axis. One year is the time it takes for the planet to revolve one complete time around the sun. And the beginning of time for our planet involves the concept of the planet circling the sun approximately 4.6 billion times. A very, very long journey by anyone's standard.

The origins of water on earth, in all likelihood, go back to some of its earliest days. In the beginning our planet was a molten stew, the heating of which was caused by many different forces. It became so hot that one of earth's primary elements, iron, began to melt and slowly sink under its own weight. This process laid the foundation for the earth's layers, the heaviest elements, like iron, sinking towards the center of the planet, and the lighter elements, like silicon, forming the crust on top of the cooling mantle.

As the earth cooled, volcanic eruptions spewed gasses out of the earth forming the first atmosphere. Water was one of the major components of the earth's first atmosphere, but was for the most part retained as vapor in the toxic sky comprised of sulfur, carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and water which were easily converted to hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, and nitric acid.

The earth kept cooling down, and, as a result, condensed steam vapor in the atmosphere into water. The water precipitated and sizzled down to earth in the form of hot rain. After millions of years of cooling, oceans of water formed on the newly formed crust, and molten rock formed the first land masses that would later eventually combine into a super continent, only to break up again due to the severe motion of plate tectonics that would form the land masses we know today.

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As I follow the trickle of water downhill it concentrates into a shallow swale. The swale is slightly deeper in steep areas, and not so deep but broader in flat areas. Where the swale is broad the autumnal remnants of plants can be seen. Here the erosion is not so great because the water passes through the broad swale slowly and so the soils are deep enough to allow plant growth. The remnant vegetation is dense where the treetops allow sunlight to penetrate to the forest floor during the growing season. In these flat areas the main streamlet is often intersected by lesser streamlets, likely from other bedrock discharges in other locations. The volume of the water in the swale becomes greater as each streamlet contributes its resources. The channel carries more water and the down cutting of the stream within the swale is more prevalent.

In areas where there is a sharp drop-off, the water plunges into the streambed and scours out a little pocket. Water stays for a while in this pocket to form a pool. I begin to notice sand and gravel sorting in the bottom of the channel, and now realize it has become a stream rather than a streamlet. I stop for a moment and look upslope. I have slowly descended about 200 vertical feet over a distance of a quarter mile. I am in an open hardwood forest dominated by red oak, sugar maple, yellow birch, and a few scattered hemlocks. Even though we are well into the dormant period as winter approaches the woods feel alive! It is alive with trees, alive with the understory of evergreen, wood ferns, and saplings, alive with the motion of water as it travels down the mountain side.

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(*"Reflections on Water"* continued on page 5)

("Reflections on Water" continued from page 4)

The first life-forms on earth were primitive bacteria (prokaryotes). They did not require or need oxygen. In fact, they were part of the equation that created oxygen to become a free and available element. Although oxygen was a common element of the early planet it was not available because almost all of it was bound to large concentrations of iron. After millions of years in the earth's oceans the iron dissolved releasing oxygen into the water. The sun helped to release the oxygen from the water, the earliest life-forms evolved into water-dependent green algae, and more oxygen was released via photosynthesis. As part of this process ozone was released into the upper atmosphere which filtered out deadly ultraviolet radiation. This would eventually allow life-forms to escape from dark recesses into the open air where life would become abundant.

Over millions of years the earth's atmosphere slowly changed. The large volumes of carbon dioxide were dissolved by rocks made up of calcium citrate and the by-product calcium carbonate was precipitated into the seas. Carbon was further removed from the atmosphere as life-forms advanced and converted as well as absorbed this element. The planet's atmosphere eventually evolved into the rich mixture dominated by nitrogen and oxygen that support our life-forms today.

Water played a huge role in the development of life on our planet. It dissolved iron rich bands of rock releasing free and available oxygen into the water and eventually the atmosphere. It provided a perfect setting for the development of blue-green algae and other early forms of plant life that helped to fill the atmosphere with oxygen. It helped to moderate planet temperatures so that life, as we know it today, could develop in an environment suitable for many different kinds of life-forms. It remains, today, an essential element of each living thing, and is a necessary requirement for life on this planet. Water is the source of life as we know it on the planet Earth.

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Over a distance of about a mile the stream leads me to a valley deep in the forest where it meets a larger stream. The stream water now flows in a northerly direction past boulders, fallen trees, and islands formed where the stream separates for a few yards and then joins back together after going on both sides of an obstruction. It is now a year-round stream with riffles, pools, and steep sloped banks. More small streams join as I go downstream, and the stream is now 10-feet- wide. The stream bottom is well-sorted gravel where the water runs quickly. In one pool I see a small brook trout dart from one side near a sunken log to the other side where there is a crevice under a boulder. In one quiet pool I look into the water hoping to see another small trout, and instead I see my own reflection. I stare at the reflection in the water and am surprised to see a gray beard and white hair on a misshapen face distorted by the slow, stream current. I look a little closer and I think I can see a boy in a 56-year-old man's body. Looking still closer, beneath the reflection in the water, I can see the surface of a planet that is over-flowing with miracles, oozing with luck, and rampant with life. And so am I.

Finance Committee Report

The FY09 budget season is upon us, meaning that interviews with department heads are in full swing. The Selectboard and Finance Committee (FinCom) work jointly to prepare the warrant articles for the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) on Saturday, May 10. (Town elections are on Friday, May 9.) There is much to be done before then.

Major budgets that have grabbed our attention thus far are the Mohawk Trail Regional School District (MTRSD) and the Town Highway Department.

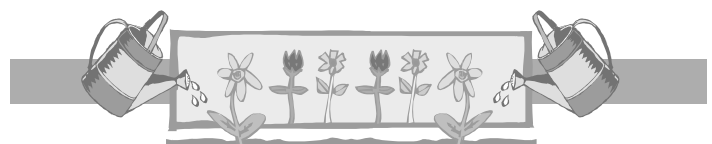
As far as the MTRSD assessment is concerned Heath looks pretty good with a net 2.61% increase that reflects higher operating costs offset by lower capital costs. Considering increases of recent years this is a much welcomed trend. Mohawk, overall, is up a net 1.7% when its operating costs are reduced by lower capital costs. Shelburne Falls even has a slight reduction in their assessment from FY08! Ashfield and Plainfield have the highest increases, 4.4% and 4.3% respectively, due to their having to pay for increased capital costs incurred via an error in calculating school building costs. We are pleased at Mohawk's effort to introduce some innovative programs that may attract students and alter the pattern of declining enrollment. All this doesn't mean we don't have questions about the school budget, but the trend is certainly reassuring. There are costs that keep going up substantially such as SPED, but the reduction in health care insurance due to joining the State's GIC program is a major achievement.

Heath's Highway Department is the second largest budget item after MTRSD. The FY08 Highway budget appropriations were meeting our obligations reasonably well until the February snows hit western Massachusetts. Those costs were exacerbated considerably by rising fuel costs. At this time the Town has sizable deficits in its winter service and fuel accounts. Also worrisome is the awful condition of our roads and how much attention they will require after the spring thaw. These concerns are a subject that will take more discussion and probably some difficult financial decisions. It is premature to be more specific at this time.

For the record, Dave Howland has indicated he will step down from the FinCom after the ATM. He is most appreciative of the cooperation and support from townspeople and co-workers these many years.

A report will be prepared for the ATM explaining the FinCom's warrant article recommendations.

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





North River Winery



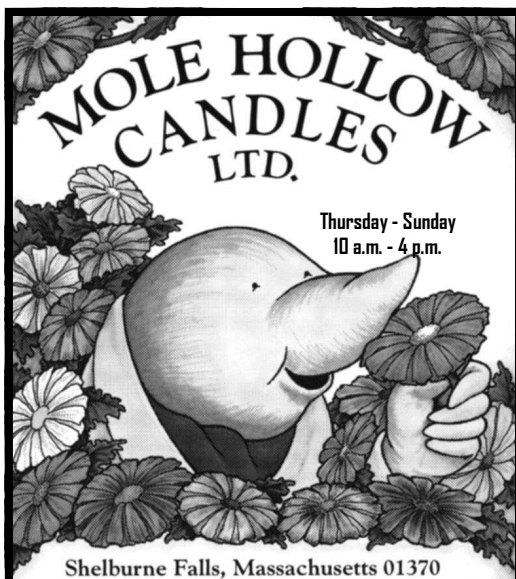
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The O.O. Elmer House - 12 Avery Brook Road

Trying to unravel the history of the home on 12 Avery Brook Road is a fascinating process involving many hours of interpreting Edward Calver's few words about this property and Pearle Tanner's equally brief comments and trying to piece this together with the extensive information found in the records at the Registrar's Office in Greenfield.

Perhaps someone in Heath can add to our knowledge. Floyd Sherman of Charlemont only remembers that he did chores there for the Reverend Worchester Perkins family, but long before that there is much that we can put together.

What seems clear is that O.O. Elmer married Caroline Rugg who lived in a house built by her father, Reuben Rugg in 1771; the cellar hole of which is still visible on the

south end of our property. The Rugg landholdings were extensive and included land where 12 Avery Brook Road is located.

As far as I can determine David Rugg built this house circa 1800 and lived there with his wife Eunice, his sister Caroline, her husband Orric O. Elmer, and possibly a sister, Diadama Rugg. O.O. Elmer lived in several houses in Heath including a house he bought in 1832 from an unknown owner on the site of the present home of Mrs. John Churchill. There were sheds there for people to park the buggies "in town." The sheds were individually owned and were eight-feet-wide by fifty-feet-long. O.O. Elmer also manufactured sulphur matches in the old potash shed (page 173 of Ed Calver's *Heath Massachusetts, a History and Guidebook*) and he had a shoe-makers shop on the property. Pearle Tanner seems to suggest on page 74 of the 1935 *Sesquicentennial Anniversary* book that the house on Avery Brook may have been built prior to 1800, but this is not clear, and she refers to it as, "the Harris Place, so-called at the Center, now owned by Reverend Worchester Perkins." Mrs. E. Harris is noted on the 1871 map of Heath.

We do know from research of the records in the Greenfield Office of Deeds, that it was lived in by Doctor Grace Wolcott's farmer. Dr. Wolcott purchased this house and 115 acres, including the house she named "Myrifiel," in 1903 from James C Temple. She established there a "rest home for neurasthenic ladies" but she died suddenly in 1915.

The title of 12 Avery Brook Road then went to Gardner and Margaret Boyd, to Harriet T. Boyd, to Mary Alice Robbins, and then from Lucy M. Robbins in 1928 to William G. and Dorothy Robbins Landon. They in turn sold the property to Reverend Worchester and Laura Griffiths Perkins, then to Winifred E. Hulbert. The property is now owned by Richard and Dorothy Hulbert.

The original section of the house represents a relatively rare variation of a Federal Style Cape Cod in that it has a one-and-a-half story front gable roof with its main entry in the gable end facing the road. The greater length of the house faces south to capture sunlight as was common in the Georgian and Federal periods in rural areas.

~ Submitted on behalf of the Heath Historical Commission by *Del Viarengo*

Heathans in Tobago

It is only five days after New Year's, seemingly a million miles from wintry Heath, that we are sitting on the covered terrace of our small cabana, having our first cup of tea of the morning, temperature about 80 degrees. The bouquet of flowers I have just picked adorns our white plastic table: aggressively pink bougainvillea, delicate sprays of purple, and brilliant bell-shaped yellows. We look out over thirty feet of grounds to a stone wall, beyond which is the seemingly endless sea, the white sand beach just below. Our first visitor arrives on the terrace wall, a perky fellow whose eyes of bright yellow shine out from feathers of ebony satin. His head cocks from side to side as if to ask what kind of creatures we are. This Carib grackle is actually sizing us up to see what tasty handout we might have for him. All this is such a far cry from the cold and snow we left the day before. We are in what is becoming to feel a bit like a second home, if only for two weeks a year. This is our third January visit to Tobago, an island in the West Indies..

Our duplex cabana sits with eight others on seven acres of the lushly tropical grounds of the Crown Point Beach Hotel. Flowering shrubs of every color and exotic trees of every shape, very few of which we know the names, adorn the area. Foot-long lizards skitter occasionally across the ground. The twitterings and chirpings of multitudinous birds fill the air, and the crashing of

the waves below the wall tell us how calm or active the swimming will be today. The steady beat of Carib rhythms emanates from outside the grounds, from the beach, from anyone with a boom box, and from the kiosks just a three-minute walk away, where one can buy anything from conch shells to jewelry to colorful beach cover-ups that wave in the breeze beckoning one to buy. Just beyond the kiosks are some food shacks where one can get native takeout, any thing from goat to flying fish to interesting food with odd names such as coo coo. From the hotel we can easily walk to some very good restaurants, to any one of several mini marts and souvenir shops, or to the friendly lady two blocks away to buy fruits and vegetables that come over from Trinidad once a week. Mostly we cook in our mini-kitchen, sit on our terrace, do crosswords, write a little, and tackle the stack of great books we have brought with us, many right from the Heath Library. The biggest decision of the day is whether, and when, to swim in the sea or the pool. It's not a bad way to live, though only for such a brief time.

This year we are joined here by our friends and fellow Heathans Ken and Paula Thane. Ken and Paula tend to be more active than we, and each day found them off on a new adventure: snorkeling, golfing, scuba diving, or having a wonderful time in the undertow which is supposed to be off-limits. We have some good times with them, exploring restaurants and sampling

("Heathans in Tobago" continued on page 9)

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Spring Weather? I Don't Think So...



This section is free to Heath Farmers, and is made possible by the sales of Carroll Stowe's compilation "The Way it is in the Country." Agricultural producers should submit their information to *The Heath Herald*, P.O. Box 54, Heath, MA 01346.

Memories of Historic North Heath

As Heath Center is getting its just renown for being a notable historic area, I would like the citizens of Heath to know a little of the history of North Heath.

I wonder how many people know that North Heath had a little center of its own back in the early 1900s. Down at the intersection of Jacobs Road and what is now Route 8A, at the foot of the steep hill, there was a post office, a general store, and a public library. (See the postcard picture showing this building). The general store was owned and operated by Arthur Fairbanks. Also there was a blacksmith shop, a large sawmill, and barrel shop that was powered by a dam on the little brook that passes under Route 8A today.

I am not sure when the post office was closed down or when the general store was last used, but I have many memories of going to the store with my dad and bringing back home cow grain and feed for the horses and chickens. The store carried large candy bars that sold for a nickel. They would last until we got home with the team and sled or wagon, depending on the season of the year. I always ate them hastily so I wouldn't have to share them with siblings. This treat was not often experienced, and it was a very sweet, selfish moment.

The store stood on the property that Robert Tanner owns today. Across the road and further north, if you look closely, you can see the remainder of the dam that supplied power for the mill. I can remember being literally dragged by my mother to the top of the hill that overlooked the mill (which would be just below Bob Delisle's house on Brunelle Road) the day the mill burned. I can almost feel the intense heat that radiated up from the fire. The mill was totally destroyed and never rebuilt. The blacksmith shop stood across the road from the mill and near the bridge. After it closed it was made into a dwelling that was occupied for many years.

There were two other mills of note in North Heath that I should mention. The one I remember stood on the south side of 8A near the Branch Brook on the property owned by Mary Giard Howe. This was a large water-powered mill also. The dam remains can be seen if one looks closely while crossing the bridge on 8A. The other mill was on the Branch Brook just below just below the bridge on the closed Branch Hill Road. This is where older natives believe the North Heath line begins. This mill predates the other two, and I am not certain what was manufactured there. I have heard that it was a tannery using hemlock bark that was plentiful in the area. The remains of the stone foundation are still there.

I would welcome any comments, corrections, or additions that can add to the history of this memorable part of Heath. The Stetson homestead burned in the late 1950s and stood across the road from the log cabin occupied by David and Lisa Whelan.

~ Doug Stetson



(*"Heathans in Tobago"* continued from page 7)

different rum punches. They were the ones who made the best find, the Italian pizza place, a short walk from the hotel.

The island offers much more than our usual daily pursuits. The northern part of the island sports the lush hills and valleys of a tropical rain forest, and the ride down the narrow winding roads of the west coast have spectacular views of the coastline far below. Englishman's Bay on the west coast is picture postcard perfect with its waving palm trees, white sands forming a perfect crescent, and uncrowded beach. One rather expects to see the billowing canvas of a square-rigger appear on the horizon as a pirate ship glides in to anchor in the deep waters. There are the usual vendors selling the usual beach attractions, but more importantly there's the ice cream man. On our first visit there, our driver/guide Althea addressed him, "Hey, Rasta Man, how about some ice cream?" The man, complete with flowing dreads and a leopard patterned cape, obliged with a choice of peanut or coconut ice cream, topped with a cherry and a cookie.

An endless source of entertainment turns out to be bird watching right from our own terrace. Put out a piece of fruit or some sugar or sugar water and you'll be inundated with a wide variety. Banana quits, feisty little guys with bright yellow breasts and black wings and backs have their name because they really do love bananas. The most stunning birds are the blue tanagers with powder blue breasts and either dark blue or aqua blue backs and

wings. The palm tanager is shades of olive green, and the Caribbean mockingbird is an elegant grey and black. Doves abound. Then, of course we must mention the chickens. Last year's two chickens, who freely roamed the grounds together, have morphed into four hens, two roosters, and three baby chicks, very cute! And they are such busy chickens, dashing here and there, even flying up occasionally onto our terrace wall, not to mention cock a doodle doo-ing well before the sun comes up.

Tobago is a friendly place and we have made friends. Some of these guests have been coming here for as much as twenty years, from Britain, Canada, and the mainland of Europe. We are on the fringes of what I like to think of as the "giddy social whirl" of Crown Point Beach Hotel. Make friends with one or two and pretty soon there are cocktail parties and people to talk with from the beach to the pool. We have also made friends with some of the staff who are always ready for a good chat.

The time goes by in a blink, and before we know it we are back in the snowiest winter in Heath in a long time. Back to shoveling all that snow, to the ice backing up on the roof and dripping down into the house where it's not supposed to, and to wiping up tracked-in snow and sand on the kitchen floor. But we are also back to a very beautiful winter, especially those three days in February where the snow clung to the trees and was beyond gorgeous.

~ Dianne Grinnell

Heath School



The Educational Benefits of Having a Classroom Pet

Written by Miss Gary and
her first and second grade students

(The following paragraphs were dictated to Miss Gary by her first grade math group.)

Our math group decided to find out how fast guinea pigs grow. Our baby guinea, Fluffy Girl, is weighed by us once a week. Before we weighed her, we wrote what we thought she would weigh. We also drew pictures of her. We decided to use gram weights, because everyone else in the world at this moment uses the metric system. We wanted to be like the rest of the world. Using the gram weights helped us learn to skip count by 2s, 5s, and 10s. We estimated how much Fluffy Girl would weigh. We wrote our estimates in our journal. Then we weighed her and found out how much she really weighed. We wrote her actual weight next to her estimated weight. Each of us created a line graph using graph paper to see how fast she grows. We used rulers to draw the sides of the line graph. Then we labeled the dates we weighed her on the bottom of the graph and made the numbers of the grams on the side. We had to count by 100s. Each time we weighed her, we found the correct spot on our graph by following the dateline until it hits the correct gram number. Then we made a dot. We used a ruler to make a straight line connecting the dot with our last dot. So far our line graphs show a line that keeps going up.

We asked the other students at Heath School to guess how much Fluffy Girl weighs by looking at our line graph, and seeing what she weighed before. One student guessed the right weight of Fluffy Girl. It was 640 grams. We announced the correct weight during our lunchtime. We liked having the whole school guess how much Fluffy Girl weighed. We predict the line will go up some more and then level off because Fluffy Girl will not grow once she is an adult guinea pig.

(The next three paragraphs were written by the second grade students in Miss Gary's class.)

What have we learned about taking care of a guinea pig? We learned that they need vitamin C. They need fresh food like bananas, apples, lettuce, celery, carrots, and cabbage. They need fresh water every day. Their water bottle needs to be cleaned regularly. They need to have their cage cleaned at least twice a week. Guinea pigs need a quiet and calm place. They purr when they are happy. They squeak loudly when they are hungry.

Our mother guinea pigs, Marshmallow and Princess, have had two batches of babies. Guinea pig babies are really called puppies. The puppies are born with all their hair and their eyes are wide open. They can eat hard food by four days old. Last time some of the puppies had red eyes because their father, Mr. Blue, had red eyes. The puppies are like their parents. Some had fluffy hair and some didn't. Some were black, white, and gray. Some were brown, white, and mocha. Altogether the mothers had six puppies. Some of our classmates think this time, there will be more puppies

born. We predict by the time you get to read this article, the puppies will already be born. Feel free to come see them at the Heath School, in our Red prime ½ classroom.

We believe every classroom should have a pet. Our pets have helped us learn a lot. The class had to take turns caring for the pets. We had to remember to give them food and water. We also try and keep our classroom calm for them. We have used them in many ways during math, reading, and writing. We learned we have to take care of them, and pay attention to them. People come to visit our guinea pigs. We like having the visitors come to enjoy our pets. Teachers, parents, siblings, and other people who like guinea pigs come by to check on our pets.

More Math at Home

What games does your family enjoy playing? Is there a schedule for everyone's activities posted somewhere in the kitchen? Do you think of "Math" as just a subject studied at school? Numbers are all around us, and we use them in our lives every day. Telling time, counting money, using a recipe to prepare your family's favorite dish, playing a board game or card game, using a tape measure or ruler are all examples of how we use math at home. The learning that happens at school is one piece of your child's education. The application of skills and concepts studied in the classroom reinforces this learning and is invaluable.

You may be thinking that you need to do a lot of planning or need expensive materials. Neither is the case. Just make yourself aware of how you use math everyday, and the ideas will flow. A deck of cards, a pair of dice, the coins in your loose change jar, an analog clock, a yardstick or tape measure, dried beans, or the weekly sale fliers from the newspaper are all materials you might find in your home. Modify the rules of familiar games, like the card game known as War. Turn it into an opportunity to practice addition, subtraction, or multiplication facts. Take the face cards out, or assign them a value, such as 10 for jacks, 11 for queens, and 12 for kings. Have an ongoing family challenge such as noticing or thinking up palindromes. A palindrome is a number or word that can be read the same way both backwards and forwards, such as 343, 1,441, racecar, or kayak. If you have Internet access at home, you might also visit a Web site with math games or challenges for your family. Two examples are <http://www.figurethis.org/index.html> and <http://www.primarygames.com/>

One of the dice games that's a favorite is called "Pig." It's a game for two or more players to practice adding (or adapt it for multiplying). The goal is to be the first player to reach a set goal such as 100. On your turn, roll the dice as many times as you like, mentally or with paper and pencil, keeping track of the sum (or product). When you decide to stop rolling, record the total for that turn and add it to the total from your previous turns. If a 1 comes up on a die, the player's turn is automatically over and you score 0 points for that turn. If 1s come up on both dice, not only does the turn end, but the total accumulated so far returns to 0. A card game to try is called "Double Trouble." It's a game for two

(*"More Math at Home"* continued on page 13)

PTP

This has been an especially productive and exciting winter for the Parent-Teacher-Partnership here at the Heath School. A real highlight was the **Artists-in-Residency Program** with the **Bamidele Drummers and Dancers** who spent four days working intensively with our students. Bamidele is a high-energy, professional performing arts and educational touring ensemble dedicated to preserving and showcasing the rhythms and movement of West Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean. Each class learned and rehearsed different dances, rhythms and songs, working with the instruments and artifacts of these diverse cultures. In addition, they studied related stories and myths and learned the geography of these regions in their classrooms. The residence program culminated in an exciting all-school performance featuring students and staff on Friday evening, March 7, to which family members, friends, and the Heath community were invited.

The PTP supported a range of enrichment programs as well, this winter, including a co-ed **Basketball Team** for grades 4-6. The team practiced beginning in December and had a roster of games with the other district elementary schools throughout January and February. Small in numbers, but mighty in spirit, this developmental team had a great season.

To drive away the Winter Blahs, we sponsored a **70s night** at the school on Friday, February 29, featuring professional D.J. Bobby C's spinning groovy 70s favorites. With many students, staff, and parents attending, we boogied-down, watched the 70's classic movie "The Wiz" and snacked on pizza, Kool-aid and yogurt granola parfaits!

The PTP was a proud sponsor of this year's **Heath School Drama Club's** production of **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**, performed at the school Friday and Saturday, March 14 and 15. Over half the student body was involved in the show, having rehearsed for months twice a week after school and more intensively as the show drew near. The show featured original music composed by students' parents and a great hip-hop dance choreographed by Heath's Martha Lively. Cameo performances included staff and community members, with a special guest appearance by Mohawk Superintendent Michael Buoniconti. With huge audience turn-out Friday and Saturday evenings, the show was a great success and an important learning and enriching experience for all students involved.

Fund-raisers, Fund-raisers, Fund-raisers ~

None of these exciting events would be possible without the tremendous support we receive from the parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, Heath school staff and Heath community members who support our many fund-raising efforts. We thank you all! Our Spring Earth Day Fund-raiser is in full swing, featuring the Jim Morris Environmental T-Shirt Catalog filled with beautiful, high quality mostly organic cotton T-shirts, tote bags, and sweatshirts. Orders are due back in early April, so call the school ASAP to place an order (337-5307).

Concessions at our Little League Baseball Games

Spring's around the corner and so is Heath Baseball! Get ready for another exciting season of our PTP-supported Heath/Rowe Little League Rookie & Major Teams! As a courtesy to our team and fans and as an important fund-raiser, the PTP provides snacks and ball-park style dinner fare as well as hot and cold drinks at our Home

games. Come on out, support the team, and enjoy dinner and a game! A schedule of games is available by the calling the school.

~ Dana Blackburn

News from The Art Room

All the classrooms started out the year with a piece for the school fund-raiser called "Original Works," children's art work on a mug, mouse pad, or T-shirt.

PROJECTS WITH DEB PORTER'S CLASS

LINES - We've been looking at straight lines and found that they can be vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. These three positions look and feel very different. First we stamped lines with the edges of cardboard pieces dipped in tempera paint. After exploring this technique, we created stamped pictures of buildings. Then we found that if you add a curved line, all the letters of our alphabet can be made from these four kinds of lines! We created a colorful version of the alphabet with an oil crayon, watercolor resist.

TEXTURES - The feelings of objects' surfaces. We began by capturing or rubbing textures. Then we discovered that we could use slit cuts to create textures in paper. We've tried the V-cut, the L-cut, the U-cut, and fringe that we can roll or kink. We are using our texture cutting skills on an alligator/dragon project.

ART WITH THE 1/2 CLASS

LINES - The three kinds of straight lines have kept us busy as well. We played with architecture by stamping lines and created oil crayon resist alphabets. We also found that when you use only vertical and horizontal lines, you can produce some beautiful plaids. On the other hand, the diagonal line is full of action and can look like a laser light display when stenciled with colorful chalks.

HABITATS - To tie in with our classroom study we are about to begin forest animal rod puppets. We'll be using celluclay and lots of fake fur! Stay tuned!

CREATING WITH THE 3s AND 4s

SHADING OR VALUE - We began the year working on insects with colored pencils. By controlling the pressure applied to the pencil we were able to create darks and lights causing our drawings to look three-dimensional. After that we tried shading with chalk. Besides controlling the pressure, we controlled the darks and lights by applying different colors. Our subjects were orangutans swinging through the sunlit and shaded trees. The shading technique was more like painting. We just finished a landscape of birches in the snow with watercolors. Again we concentrated on darks and lights while learning how to work with a different material. We learned how important the amount of water to paint is.

STUDIO TIME WITH THE 5TH AND 6TH GRADERS

SHADING OR VALUE - We also began the year creating beautifully shaded insects with colored pencils. Then we tied into our classroom study of the skeleton and looked at the skull as a still-life. Using china markers and white colored pencils on gray paper, we carefully shaded our skulls to be as lifelike as possible. Very imaginative backgrounds were rendered to place the skull. Now we are on the high seas, sailing with the early explorer of our study.

("News From the Art Room" continued on page 13)

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory



A heartfelt thanks to everyone who made the Heath Elementary School's Drama Club production of **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** - the story of the adventures of young Charlie Bucket inside the chocolate factory of eccentric candy maker Willy Wonka - such a success. In addition to playing to three sold-out audiences, sales from Wonka Bars raised \$250 for the Heath Library Fund and \$200 for the Art Department to purchase supplies for all four elementary schools.

Last season, Drama Club began what we hope will become a tradition of performing all or parts of the play at the Senior Center in Heath. We apologize but, unfortunately, due to illness and how early the Easter holiday fell in the calendar, it was not possible to schedule another show or a preview of this year's production for the seniors. At one point we had nine participants in the drama out sick, which does not include family members and other students and faculty at the school who succumbed to a late and particularly harsh strand of the flu. Under those circumstances, it did not seem safe or sensible to bring the show and its cast in such close proximity to the town's elder community. We appreciate your understanding and look forward to performing for you next year!

It was important to both of us that *Herald* readers and the rest of the community have this information, however, Jane wanted us to say a little more about the performances and why we chose this particular play. We're not sure how to answer that question so we'll let the children field it for us. When Bruce, in one of our first rehearsals, asked the group, "What's one of the most important messages of this play?," Emma (*Veruca Salt*) didn't skip a beat, "There's nothing more important than family." We both lit up like pinball machines. It was a good answer. Well that's just as true in our world as it is in Charlie's and echoes what we told the cast before they went on:

We're a family too! Just like the Buckets. And what does family do? They look out for each other. And that's what we're going to do tonight. When, not if, someone makes a mistake are we going to get mad or frustrated with them? No, of course not. We're going to be there for them and take care of them no matter who it is or how big or how small their mistake. Because that's what family does, they look out for each other. Mistakes are part of the excitement of doing live theater.

People go to see plays for different reasons than they go to the movies. People go to the movies in order to imagine a different kind of life for themselves. They want to experience what life would be like if it was perfect if everyone had all the money

and love they needed. But people go to see plays because the actors are just like them. Their lives often seem broken and in disrepair. They make mistakes. They stumble over their lines. They don't always know exactly what to do or say. The people in the audience want to see what people can do—what they can do—to make themselves feel whole again when life throws them an unexpected surprise or two. And that's what we're going to do tonight. We're going to help people feel whole again by showing them our mistakes and how when they happen we don't let them stop us, we just keep on going.

Did we mention this is a *drama club*? Okay, we don't expect that everyone who attended the performances had a cathartic experience. Some may have come for the pure joy and fun of it all. But laughter is healing, too. And when the curtain came down we wanted everyone to feel a little more connected to the person sitting next to them and to be reminded that ours is a community that heals. And when we come together like a family to work on something whether it's a play, a fair, or any other task or problem facing our school or community, anything is possible!

Thanks for coming and we hope to see you next season!

~ Bruce Lessels and Jonathan Diamond

("News From the Art Room" continued from page 12)

Using watercolor techniques to create darks and lights as well as texture, we are painting seascapes complete with the authentic style of ship on which our early explorer would have embarked!

~ Polly Anderson

("More Math at Home" continued from page 11)

players with cards Ace (1) through 9 and a die. In between the players is the common deck of cards. One player turns a card over and the both players double its value to find the sum.

Then the other player rolls the die and the players subtract the lesser number from the greater number. The first player to say the difference out loud collects the card. Play continues alternating which player turns the card and which rolls the die until the common deck of cards is finished. The player with the most cards wins, and both players have practiced their skill at adding and subtracting to 18. In the event of a tie when the players are speaking the answer, the card is left down to let the pile build. Play continues until one player says the correct answer before the other and takes all the accumulated cards.

Being able to explain one's thinking and strategies for problem solving both verbally and in writing is a skill that we address. It is important to be able to justify a solution that's been achieved. Pose a problem solving situation for your family to resolve, such as how much money it might be needed for a family outing to a museum or other activity and how long it will take to save that amount. The upper grade students are working on MCAS open response questions given in prior years. We'll also be looking at various multiple choice questions to familiarize students with the format of the questions that are asked. Anyone can access released test items at the Massachusetts Department of Education Web site, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html>. Visit this site to see what our young mathematicians are expected to know, and keep your math thinking caps engaged.

~ Marilyn O'Brien

Assessing, Changes and Dreams

Everything changes. We grow – we grow old; towns shrink and grow; land is forested, is cleared, and then becomes wild again – our whole planet becomes another place. I read a story in Irmarie Jones' *Greenfield Recorder* column the other day about Heath and it mentioned that in the 1830s there were over 1,200 people in this town. When my family moved here in 1979, there were about 350 souls, and now there are more than 800. I'm no historian, but I guess that the flow into this town in the early 19th century was probably related to the Davis Mine in Rowe. In the 1960s, the flow out might have been the lack of jobs, as the local mills were vanishing (remember the "glassine" in Monroe Bridge?) and subsequently all but a few remnants of agriculture collapsed here. And then the town grew again.

Some of the changes seem to be improvements. You can buy all sorts of food at the supermarket and FedEx will bring the world to your doorstep "next-day" after you've ordered it via your computer the day before. In my opinion, this is a much more sophisticated place to live in than it was 40 years ago: There are even fancy restaurants in Shelburne Falls, no less!

Not long ago, a lady at my office went to New York City to visit her son, who had moved there a year or so before. Like quite a few denizens of this county, she'd never made that great trek before. I tried to give her some tips on subways, etc., being somewhat familiar with the place. She came back and told me an amazing story: her son was very excited at the prospect of taking his bride and his Mom out shopping for furniture for the apartment. And they were going to drive out to New Jersey to the Ikea. When I was a lad growing up near that apartment, if you had told someone you were going to New Jersey to buy furniture, the whole neighborhood would have been in an uproar. Nobody had a car, for cryin' out loud.

Many of the changes I see in Heath, as in Manhattan, for that matter, seem similarly, oddly, *suburban*. I commute daily and am not alone in that. But it's more than just this kind-of-bedroom-community aspect of life here: we want larger, fancier, code-compliant homes, we need a car for every person over 12, we want cell service but no cell towers, we demand more services from our town. We, simply, require more of the American culture: faster Internet access, roads cleared of snow to get those kids to soccer (that seems unlikely, I guess, but you get my drift, so to say), those next-day packages, satellite TV, pizza delivery. Don't get me wrong, I'm at the head of the line on this stuff, but these weren't choices 40 years ago.

It is easy to get sentimental about the past: Kids behaved, snow was deeper, men were real men, everyone smoked cigarettes – people, back then, knew how to *live*. But, seriously, you get old enough and change can't be ignored. Is it change for the better? Perhaps, it is just change. *Sic transit*.

My major concern in this flow toward sub-urbanity is a nagging feeling that we deal with each other less as neighbors. I just hope that, as we go forward into still more change, that neighborliness in Heath does not devolve from reality to concept (to paraphrase Fred Burrington's Heath Fair T-shirts from a few years ago).

As an assessor, I have seen a bit of change. One significant change is the increase in value of the property in our town: this year, the State Department of Revenue has "certified" (okayed) our suggestion that the town is now worth almost \$93 million – a decade ago, we assessed the value of Heath at just over \$40 million – must be a more worthwhile place! Ten years ago, we had to raise about \$850,000 in local property taxes, now it is more than twice that.

The landscape is the landscape. I don't think the squirrels feel it's any more valuable than it was a decade ago. So, something else has changed. We Americans love to say that the market fixes all and, indeed, it is the market that has fixed the value of the town. But what does the market think of Heath? In some ways, we are a *dream town*. Our school, to many, is a dream school. I worked there for a couple of years and that was like a dream to me – I run into the kids I knew and they all look like movie stars now.

Many people fantasize about their childhood and remember the good old days – sitting on the porch, swimming in the pond, exploring the woods. Some of these folks live in places where there are no woods, porches, or ponds and have, what I consider to be, a lot of money. Recently, a developer bought a farm in Charlemont and divided the place up into variously-sized lots (you may have seen the ad – "2 to 50 acre lots" – in the newspaper). I've heard that most of those lots have sold this spring (for what I consider to be a lot of money), despite the generally low number of sales state-wide. As assessors, it's our job to assess property at its "highest and best use." How do we factor in the *dream* market?

Well, besides assessing dreams, the job of assessor has changed in other ways, and has been doing so for quite a long time: more computer work, more dealings with the State. The increased dependence on computers to comply with state regulations has pushed the Board to consider changing to a new system. Seems ironic that the one developed by the State is too inflexible to help us meet the State's own requirements. We will be asking for your blessing (well, the money, really) to make the change at town meeting.

What hasn't changed is that it is still a pleasure to go out viewing and meet neighbors, to help people understand their taxes when they come into the office – or just chat – and, in an odd way, to untie the state-bound knots of tax-rate-setting, so the town can move on.

Well, I am also taking my turn in moving on: this is my last article as an assessor. This spring, I'm ending my assessing days – 12 years I have enjoyed greatly. I thank everyone in the town for allowing me to do this job. The neighborliness of the job was the most valuable reward I have received.

I'm happy to write that we have a candidate to replace me on the Board: Alice Wozniak, a resident of North Heath. I had the pleasure of meeting her for the first time a couple of weeks ago when our Board visited the Colrain Assessors. Alice is the assessors' clerk there and is very knowledgeable about how the office runs. As we are proposing changing software to the system she has been using, it seems as though this would be a great match. She'll certainly be getting my vote in May.

~ Henry Leuchtman



Photograph by Sandy Gilbert

Years of Service Honored

On February 10, 2008, a wonderful celebration of service to the Heath Community was held at Stillwater's Restaurant. Under the thoughtful and thorough planning of Ken Gilbert, four essential members of the Heath Volunteer Fire Department were recognized for a collective total of 179 years of service! Earl Gleason and F. Walter Gleason were each recognized for 60 years of service to the department; Robert Gruen, for 31 years of service, and Richards Steinbock, for 29 years of service.

Earl and Walt began their Fire Department careers as infants back in 1948. Earl served as Chief from 1975 to 1996. Both are still active members of the department. Bob Gruen, who recently retired from the department, served from 1976 to 2007. "Steiny," who left the department in 2004 when career opportunities drew him away from town, began his department service in 1975.

The celebration also included a special recognition by the Heath Selectboard. Certificates were presented and a new commemorative plaque of the "Heath Fire Department Honor Roll" was unveiled to recognize department members with 25 years of service and those individuals who have served as Fire Chief during their career. The plaque is installed in Sawyer Hall and lists the following honorable citizens:

Homer Tanner Chief 1930-1947	Howard Thompson Chief 1947 – 1975
Earl Gleason member 1948- still serving Chief 1975-1996	F. Walter Gleason 1948- still serving
Richards Steinbock 1975-2004	Robert Tanner 1975- still serving
Steve Bigelow 1975- still serving	Robert Gruen 1976-2007
Mike Smith member 1982 – still serving Chief 1996- current Chief	

The evening's celebrations included much reminiscing and many stories of "first fire." These gentlemen certainly deserve our thanks and well wishes. Please join us in extending our gratitude to these dependable and committed citizens for a job well done.

~Sheila Litchfield

News from Franklin County Solid Waste Management District

How to Dispose of Household Batteries

There are many different types of household batteries and some contain mercury and other heavy metals. If improperly disposed of, batteries can release mercury, cadmium, or other heavy metals into the air and water, that eventually enter the food chain and pose health threats to people and the environment. Below are disposal instructions for specific battery types.

Rechargeable batteries are found in electronics and appliances that can be recharged, such as cellular and cordless phones, cordless power tools, laptop computers, camcorders, remote-control toys, two-way radios, electric toothbrushes and razors, and emergency medical equipment. Rechargeable batteries contain heavy metals and should *never* be thrown away; they should always be recycled. The Heath transfer station has been supplied with a special "Call 2 Recycle" box for rechargeable battery collection; ask Bob. There is no charge for recycling these batteries. The specific battery chemistries accepted in these boxes are: Nickel-cadmium (Ni-cad), Nickel Metal Hydride (Ni-MH), Lithium Ion batteries (Li-ion) and Small Sealed Lead (Pb), plus cell phones and their batteries.

Button batteries are the small, round, silver batteries found in watches, clocks, calculators, hearing aids, and some toys and household items. Button batteries contain mercury and must be disposed of properly. The Heath transfer station has been supplied with a collection canister for the recycling of button batteries; ask Bob. There is no charge for recycling these batteries.

Alkaline (flashlight) batteries are the most common household batteries. Alkaline batteries manufactured since 1994 do not contain added mercury. They can go into a landfill, but *should not* be incinerated; trash from Heath, along with the trash from most of the towns in Franklin County, goes to an incinerator in Agawam. This trash incinerator creates energy for 7,000 homes. Since Heath's trash goes to the incinerator, batteries should not be put in the trash. Heath residents can bring alkaline batteries to the town transfer station and give them to Bob. Alkaline batteries will be collected and sent to a landfill.

If you have any disposal or recycling questions, please contact the Franklin County Solid Waste District at 413-772-2438. MA Relay for the hearing impaired:

711 or 1-800-439-2370 (TTY/TDD)

Email: info@franklincountywastedistrict.org.

Website: www.franklincountywastedistrict.org.

Remembering Edith

We wanted to take this time and space to honor Edith Royer, a true Heathan, for her many contributions to so many and to recognize her faithful service to this paper. Edith was part of the *Herald* staff from the beginning in 1979, and for years until she left Heath, was in charge of gathering the information for the Milestones column.

How do you tell a story that lives in your heart? I am proud to say for the past 23 years Edith Royer has been my grandmother. Although she did pass away on February 14, 2008, her memory lives on with all of us who knew and loved her. It's hard to put into words the impact someone has on your life, what they've taught you and what you carry with you.

The last nine days I spent with Grammie were in the hospital. It seemed like my turn to take care of her for once, to be there for her like she had always been for me. We would talk about the weather, the upcoming summer and fairs, and, of course, what was going on in my love life. She talked about Buckley Nursing Home and how great everyone was to her. She really couldn't wait to get back there.

To tell all the unforgettable moments we had together would take up a lot more room than this paper can hold. We read together, fed geese at Rowe Pond, and spent plenty of time picking on Blackie (her brother). It's hard to think back and not smile about all the good times we had together. For a woman who had no children, she sure did have a lot of them who loved her. She never forgot anyone's birthday. She rarely said I love you; she didn't have to. It was always "same to you too, come back again," even in the hospital. It was just her way.

Without her here, there's something missing. There's a void I never imagined and no answer to the last letter I wrote. It's great to hear stories from people who knew her and I'm so proud to have had her in my life. Heath may be a small town, but it has been home to a very special lady with a great big heart.

~ Megan Clark

Edie has been a presence in my life since I can remember. My mother had her come from her home on South Road to help with some household chores but mainly to look after us, the three small Landstrom girls. She and my sister Pearl had the same birthday just ten years apart. (Speaking of birthdays, did anyone she knew ever not get a card from her?) So she started being a "caretaker" of children as a teenager. If we make a list of all her many 'charges' it would be a mighty long one. If she had written about the antics of all us children it might be quite revealing.



Edie, with or without her husband Andy, over her long life, was present in many venues of Heath's 'goings-on.' Among those were looking after homes of the summer colony, caring for cemeteries, manning the food booth at the Fair, being-president and active member of the Ladies Aid. She was not one to blow her own horn but was always there to help with whatever needed to be done in her calm and efficient manner.

~ Ruth E. Johnson

Heath has lost a very special friend. Edith could be found in the kitchen working on Ladies Aid suppers. She kept a very special book with birthdays and anniversaries and would always remember you with a card. She never

had children of her own but was grandmother to many children. Her last years were spent at the Buckley Health Care Center. While there she always kept in touch with what was happening in Heath. She will be greatly missed by all of us.

~ Dot and Ken Stetson

My Aunt Wilda Wolf, my father's sister, would tell us of Edith's warmth and kindness as a neighbor on Ledges Road. Edith's help included such practical things as locating Wilda's spring in the woods behind her house.

~ Ned Wolf

My earliest memory of Edith Royer was when she and Andy were married. I was probably 12 or 13. It made quite an impression on me because she was so much younger than Andy. Years passed and after I returned to Heath, I got to know Edith better. She was always at Ladies Aid. She kept records of everything, the organizations we donated to and how much. She could tell you how many dolls or monkeys or aprons were made, and what we charged for each item we sold at our annual Ladies Aid Fair in July. Edith was always busy! She made many doll clothes and pot holders, all handwork.

~ Catherine Cromack

Heath Business Directory

Bald Mountain Pottery

625-8110

The Benson Place

Wild Blueberries & Blueberry Spread

337-5340

Fred Burrington

Artist

337-4302

Dave Cote Builders

Branch Hill Road

337-4705

Robert Delisle

Electrician

337-5716

Russell E. Donelson

Design/Construction/Cabinetry

337-4460

Jerry Ferguson

Home Improvement

Lic. Electrician

337-4317

Earl M. Gleason

Fire Equipment

337-4948

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It's Your Health and Safety

Meet Our New Town Nurse

By Donna Weber RN

I'd like to take this time to introduce myself. My name is Donna Weber, and I am a Registered Nurse who has lived in the Town of Heath for the past nine years. I was offered, and accepted, the position of Town Nurse just over a month ago. I am enjoying getting to know the members of my community and look forward to meeting all of you. If at any time you have questions, concerns, or would just appreciate a nurse checking in on you or someone you care about in Heath, please feel free to contact me either at my office on Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at 337-4847, or at my home anytime at 337-6605.

Just as a reminder: Although flu season is coming to an end, it is always a great idea to remember to wash your hands often. It only takes a few seconds of soap and water (about as long as it takes to sing the alphabet) to prevent the spread of not only the flu but of numerous infections and colds.

Thank you!



Heath's Unsung Heroine

Heath's own Selectboard member **Sheila Litchfield**, a woman of many talents, has been chosen as one of Massachusetts' Community Unsung Heroines by the Massachusetts Committee on the Status of Women.

Selected for her contributions to the Town of Heath, she will be honored at an awards ceremony on May 14 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Massachusetts State House.

CONGRATULATIONS, SHEILA!



Photographed by Jane de Leeuw



*Friends of the
Heath School Library*

Join Us
at 8:30 a.m. on May 10
for breakfast before
the Annual Town Meeting
at the Heath School
We will offer a Buffet of Taste Treats
including Quiche, Deviled Eggs,
and an array of goodies
to tempt your appetite.

As always, all donations will go to the Heath
School Library

Selectboard's Report

Meeting Schedule

The Board has resumed meeting every Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m. in Sawyer Hall.

School Information Meeting

The Selectboard hosted a "School Information Meeting" on March 18 at the Heath Elementary School. The purpose was to review the final reports of the task forces and the findings of the Independent Heath School Focus Group. The Board summarized the history of the process and read summaries of the previously submitted reports. David Howland, Jonathan Diamond, and Lorena Loubsky-Lonergan reported on the financial implications of an independent school.

In addition, Heath Elementary School principal Anne Mislak reported on the current status of the school staffing, enrollment, multi-age classrooms, and choice students. School Committee member Emily Cross read a report written by Pam Porter on the budget, assessments to towns, and the status of subcommittee work on school consolidation.

In brief, the cost of operating an independent school does not seem feasible for the Town at the present time. The effort by the District for school consolidation has been suspended due to the failure to get a change to the regional agreement passed and the refusal of the Mass School Building Authority to continue mortgage reimbursements for closed facilities. The Heath Elementary School will continue this year and next with three multiage classrooms and a half-time principal shared with the Colrain Elementary School.

A survey has been distributed to residents of Heath to get feedback on attitudes toward the school and to try to determine the strength of support for an independent school. Minutes of the March 18 meeting will be posted on the Town Web site and copies of task force reports and minutes will be available from the Board if requested. Survey results will be available when tabulation and analysis are completed.

Performance Reviews and Budget Hearings

The Board has been conducting annual performance reviews for Town employees and reviewing and updating job descriptions as needed. Budget hearings for the Town Departments are being conducted to aid in putting together the FY09 Budget that will be presented at the Annual Town Meeting on May 10.

Energy Performance Contracting

The Selectboard has agreed to participate in a proposal for Energy Performance Contracting, which is being sponsored by The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG). The program is designed to hire a contractor to evaluate energy usage of municipal facilities and make improvements to reduce energy consumption. The contractors are called Energy Service Companies (ESCO). They will determine and guarantee energy savings and will design and implement improvements to town facilities to achieve those goals. A portion of the savings will go to pay for the improvements and contractor's fees. No money needs to be appropriated by the Town for the improvements recommended by the ESCO.

All expenses are borne by the ESCO which is reimbursed by a commitment of the Town to continue to fund its energy budget at an agreed-upon level for a number of years as specified in the contract.

The FRCOG has been receiving proposals from ESCOs and will evaluate and select a company to perform the service for all towns that agree to enter in to a contract.

Internet Survey

Tell your legislators and the State government how much we in Heath need high-speed Internet service. The Berkshire and Pioneer Valley Connects have been working with legislators, state agencies, and Governor Patrick's administration to bring high-speed Internet service to unserved Massachusetts cities and towns, the majority of which are in the western part of the State. They have developed a survey that will help them gather the information necessary to do this. The survey is available in the library, town offices, and on the Town's Web site (www.townofheath.org). You may fill it out online or you can download it, fill it out, and return it to the town offices. The deadline for filling out the survey is April 30.

Heath Online

Take some time to visit the Town's Web site at 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. You may contact the Board at 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

CANDIDATES SLATE

Selectman, Brian De Vriese (incumbent), 3 years

Moderator, Douglas Wilkins (incumbent), 3 years

Assessor, open, incumbent not running, 3 years (but Alice Wozniak has taken out nomination papers)

Finance Committee, open, incumbent not running, 3 years (but Donald Freeman has taken out nomination papers)

Finance Committee, David Gott (incumbent), 1 year

Planning Board, open, incumbent not running, 5 years (Doug Mason has taken out nomination papers)

Library Trustee, Kate Bailey (incumbent), 3 years

Dog Officer, Robert Tanner Jr. (incumbent), 1 year

Constables, Robert Tanner Jr., and Jeffrey Simmons (incumbents), 1 year

TOWN ELECTION - MAY 9 - HEATH LIBRARY



Library Lines

Springtime in the Library

By Donald Purington

An overnight four inches of fresh fallen snow still covered the Heath Common and surrounding hills but it was springtime in the library. On Friday, March 21, children and parents who came to Preschool Story Hour were greeted by a tall white vase filled with forsythia in full bloom. Library Assistant Lyra Johnson and her mother Cynthia Johnson cut the forsythia two weeks earlier and "forced" the blossoms. The story hour activity was a library-wide, candy-filled egg hunt, much to the delight of the participants. Many thanks to Lyra for the creative work she is doing with the children in a warm, welcoming Preschool Story Hour program.

The display case is loaded with a collection of eggcups, gathered through the years by Sheila Litchfield, including a beautiful hand blown glass cup created by her glassblower son Tucker Litchfield.

The walls of the library are decorated with paper quilts created by Helen Mackie. A poster urges library patrons to start now on a quilt and have it ready to display in this summer's Heath Fair.



Photographed by Lyra Johnson

A Few of the New Items at the Library:

Adult Fiction Books: *Change of Heart* by Jodi Piccoul, *Light of the Moon* by Luanne Rice, *Strangers in Death* by J. D. Robb, *A World Made by Hand* by James Kunstler, *the Betrayal Game* by David L. Robbins, and *The Uncommon Reader* by Alan Bennett.

Adult Nonfiction Books: *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose* by Eckhart Tolle, *The Truth About Organic Gardening* by Jeff Gilman, *Two at a Time Socks* a knitting book by Melissa Morgan-Oakes, *Sundays in America: a Yearlong Road Trip in Search of Christian Faith* by Suzanne Strempek Shea, and *The Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* by the president of Harvard University, Drew Gilpin Faust.

Books on CD: *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Fight Terrorism and Build Nations...One School at a Time* by Greg Mortenson, *A Life at Work: the Joy of Discovering What You were Born to Do* by Thomas Moore, and *Appeal* by John Grisham.

Young Adult Fiction Books: *Surprises According to Humphrey* by Betty G. Birney (this is the 4th book in the very popular Humphrey series about an adventurous classroom hamster), *Tunnels* by Roderick Gordon, and the 2008 Newbery Medal winner *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!: Voices From a Medieval Village* by Laura Amy Schlitz.

Young Adult/Children's Nonfiction Books: *The Amazing Outdoor Activity Book* by Angela Wilkes.

Children's Picture Books: *I Love You More* by Laura Duksta, *Monkey and Me* by Emily Gravett, and *Blessing of the Beasts* by Ethel Pochocki, illustrated with woodcuts by Barry Moser.

DVDs: *Becoming Jane*, *Game Plan*, *Hair Spray* (musical), *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *The Real Dirt on Farmer John*.

DVDs (Children): *Switching Goals* (starring the Olsen twins), and *Growing Up with Arthur* (3-episode from the PBS- TV series)

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Milestones

Edith M. Coates Royer, a longtime Heath resident, died on February 14, 2008. Born in Colrain, she was the daughter of Frederick S. and Blanche Joy Coates.

Edith's 40-year marriage to Andreas Royer ended with his death in 1981.

She served the Town of Heath in many capacities. She was a member and past president of the Heath Ladies Aid, the Community Hall Committee, the Hall Services Committee, and the former Heath Grange. She was caretaker for many Heath summer homes, served in the food booths at the Heath Fair and Charlemont's Yankee Doodle Days. A Brown Bag volunteer, she was also a past president of the Charlemont Ladies Auxiliary.

Survivors include four nephews, Robert Coates of Turners Falls, Shawn Coates of Greenfield, Robert Coates of Charlemont, and Adam Coates Royer of Tennessee; three nieces, Linda Hill and Wanda Coates of Greenfield, and Christine Coates of Colrain; a granddaughter, **Megan Clark of Heath**; step-grandchildren Peter Royer of Hadley, Michael Royer of Buckland, Kathy Abbey of Gill, Tim Royer of Hendersonville, TN, and Christopher Royer of Long Plains, TN.

A graveside service will take place in the spring in Heath's Center Cemetery.

Memorial Contributions may be made to the Heath Ladies Aid in care of Ruth Corey, 12 Schoolhouse Road, Heath, MA 01346.

Frank Stetson Brown of Shelburne Falls died on February 17, 2008. Born on March 30, 1926, he was the son of **Leonard and Ida Sparrow Brown of Heath**.

He attended local schools in Marlboro, VT, and served in the U.S. Marines during World War II. Self-employed as a woodsman most of his life, he was a former two-term Rowe selectman.

Survivors include his three sons, Craig Brown of Charlemont, Brad Brown of Jupiter, FL, and Chris Brown of Rowe; five brothers, Leonard of Rowe, Roy of Whitingham, VT, **Wendell of Heath**, Roger of Readsboro, VT, and Reggie of Colrain; three sisters, Lillian Benz of Greenfield, Janet Nido of Wilmington, VT, and Annette Lee of Whitingham, VT; two grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Memorial donations may be made to Hospice of Franklin County, 329 Conway Street, Suite 2, Greenfield, MA 01301.

Charlotte M. Looman Underwood of Colrain died on February 29, 2008. Born in Colrain on October 3, 1930, she was the daughter of Foster and Josephine Caron Looman.

She was employed at the former Kendall Mills for 33 years, retiring in 1991.

Survivors include her husband of 58 years, Robert E. Underwood; a son, James Underwood and a daughter, Glenda Wood, both of Colrain, and seven grandsons, Robert Johnson of California, Shane Johnson of Greenfield, Wade Johnson of Colrain, **Scott Underwood and Jason Underwood, both of Heath**, and Jake Underwood and Cody Underwood, both of Colrain, and six great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, 30 Speen St., Framingham, MA 01701, or to the American Diabetes Association, P.O. Box 31160, Hartford, CT 06150.

Jane Wolf, a former summer resident of Heath, died on February 8, 2008, in Kingman, AZ.

Born on December 13, 1950, she was the daughter of the Right Reverend Frederick, Episcopal Bishop of Maine, and Barbara Wolf who owned a house in the Dell.

She was a doctor who worked during the 1980s in the Department of Psychiatry of the Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown, NY.

Survivors include her sisters, Julietta Wolf-Foster of Rochester, NY, and Molly Wolf of Kingston, Ontario, and her nieces, Emily Wolf-Mialky of Dansville, NY, and Catherine Wolf of Cambridge.

Requiescat in pace

Letter to the Editors



Letters of THANKS to the *Heath Herald*

I am both embarrassed and appreciative of the accolades regarding my town service expressed in the recent Valentine's Day edition of the *Heath Herald*. Lord knows I shared whatever contributions I may have made with many people over many years. The history of Massachusetts' locally managed communities, all 351 of them, demands its residents pay attention to their town's affairs. That fact has generated a lot of concerned and experienced public citizenry over the last few centuries. I say this to put my meager efforts into perspective along with all those I have worked with in the Town of Heath, the Mohawk School District, and many in the Legislature, State bureaucracy, and various associations.

So, thank you Tom Lively, Brian DeVriese, Sheila Litchfield, Gloria Fisher, Janis Carr Dave Gott, Art Schwenger, Ned Wolf, Jack Cable, Eileen Tougas, and Don Freeman for your kind words in the *Heath Herald* and to all those with whom I have associated who have helped the Town of Heath meet its challenges over the years. And, my love and thanks to Pegge for her patience with my many hours at meetings and at my computer.

~ Dave Howland

I want to thank the *Heath Herald* for my beautiful Valentine. What a surprise! So many people wrote such wonderful things about me; I am not sure I deserve those kind words. Again I truly thank all of you. Also, I cannot think of anyone else I'd rather share my Valentine with than Dave Howland. He is a pillar of our community!

~ Val Kaempfer



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Heath, MA 01346

Heath's Monthly Precipitation (inches)

(Observed by Heath School Staff and Students)

	<u>Snow/sleet</u>	<u>Rain</u>
From January 11, 2008	5"	0"
February	34 ½"	2 ½"
To March 10	7"	3 ¼"

In this reporting period:

The few small storms we had in January were of the sleet and icy type. February started out and continued through the "whole" month with storms of the snow, sleet, and icy type.

We had a high of 52 degrees on 2/18 and a low of minus 11 degrees on 2/29. The first of March started following the same suit, but, as of this report, had warmed up to be more on the rainy side.

~ Timothy Lively

Community Calendar

April 2008

April 03 - Senior Luncheon, Community Hall-Senior Center, 11:45 a.m.

PTP Meeting, Heath School, 3:30 p.m.

April 04 - Preschool Story Hour, Heath Public Library, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.

Hypnotist at Mohawk Trail Regional High School, 6:00 p.m.

April 05 - Senior Scholarship Deadline

April 09 - Schools' Early Release Day; Heath School, 12:45 p.m.

K-12 School Committee Meeting, MTRHS

April 11 - Grades 5 & 6 to Rowe for Springfield Symphony performance, 9:30 a.m.

April 17 - Senior Luncheon, Community Hall-Senior Center, 11:45 a.m.

April 18 - Preschool Story Hour, Heath Library, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.

PTP Movie Night, *The Perfect Game*, Heath School, 7:00 p.m.

April 19 - PTP Bike Rodeo, Heath School, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

April 20 - **HAPPY PASSOVER**

April 21-25 - **SPRING BREAK**

April 22-23 - Grades K-3, Hawley Nature Camp

April 24-25 - Grades 4, 5, 6, Hawley Nature Camp

May 2008

May 01 - Senior Luncheon, Community Hall-Senior Center, 11:45 a.m.

May 02 - Preschool Story Hour, Heath Library, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.

May 04 - Cinco de Mayo Fiesta, Community Hall, 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.

May 07 - Schools' Early Release Day

May 08 - Kids in Concert, MTRHS, 6:30 p.m.

May 09 - **TOWN VOTING, HEATH LIBRARY, NOON TO 7:00 P.M.**

Kindergarten Registration, no regular K classes.

May 10 - **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING, HEATH SCHOOL, 9:00 A.M.**

FHSL Continental Breakfast, Heath School, 8:30 a.m.

May 14 - K-12 School Committee Meeting, MTRHS

May 15 - Senior Luncheon, Community Hall-Senior Center, 11:45 a.m.

May 16 - Preschool Story Hour, Heath Library, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.

May 18 - Junior Class Auction. MTRHS

May 21-22 - MCAS - Math

May 24 - Senior Prom

May 26 - **Memorial Day, no school**

May 27 - MCAS - US History, MTRHS

May 27-28 - Senior Exams, MTRHS

May 30 - Preschool Story Hour, Heath Library, 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. (last session until fall)

June 2008

June 01 - **MTRHS GRADUATION**

An altered look about the hills;
 A Tyrian light the village fills;
 A wider sunrise in the dawn;
 A deeper twilight on the lawn
 A print of a vermillion foot;
 A flippant fly upon the pane;
 A spider in his trade again;
 An added strut in chanticleer;
 A flower expected everywhere...

~ Emily Dickinson, from *Nature: April*

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