



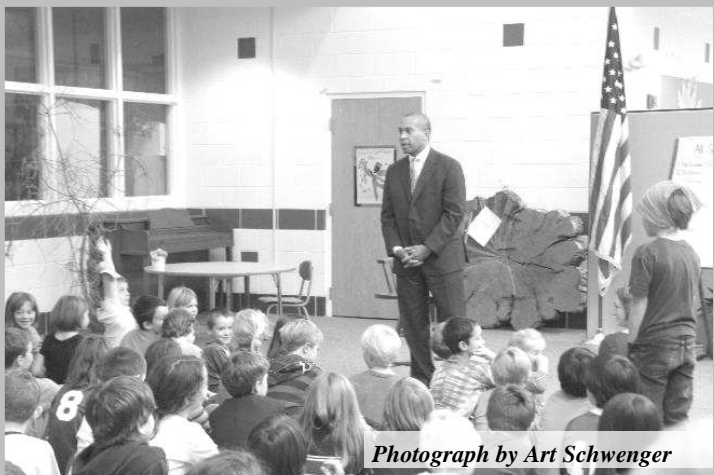
HEATH HERALD

Heath's First Newspaper

\$1.50

Volume 33, Number 1

April/May 2011



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Photograph by Lorena Loubsky



Photograph by Amy Love

Heath School Happenings



Photograph by Lorena Loubsky



Photograph by Lorena Loubsky



Photograph by Amy Love

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

THE HERALD DEADLINE FOR THE June/July 2011 issue is May 10, 2011. All articles are the property of the Heath Herald unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Call (413) 337-8594 or E-mail Jane at jdeleeeu@crocker.com.

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Heath Union Church News

At our Family Night on February 15, we greatly enjoyed a Sing-Along with Dave Gott, who even taught us to play the spoons! A potluck dinner was enjoyed on March 6 after the morning worship. The Family Night on March 13 had an Irish Theme, as we welcomed Claire and Tom Rabbitt who shared their travelogue of Ireland and violin selections by Claire. On the 19th, a beef stew supper was sponsored by the Standing Committee to continue fund-raising efforts for the dishwasher.

As we are now in the season of Lent our service schedule is as follows; April 17, Palm Sunday Morning worship, Maundy Thursday Communion Service at 7:00 p.m. on April 21, and our usual 10:00 a.m. worship on Easter, April 24. Once more we ask anyone who would like to join our choir for Easter to contact Ruth Johnson or Tracey Brooks.

The floor of the altar platform is now reinforced and refinished, ready for our Johnson Organ's return.

As stated before, remember Pastor Phill is available at the numbers listed below.

Adult Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.

Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Bible Study/Prayer meeting: Thursday, 6:00 p.m.

Pastor's Hours: Thursday, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Church Telephone: 337-4019, Pastor: (413) 648-9077

Deacons:

Richard Gallup, 337-5367

Tracey Brooks, (413) 775-3872

Ruth Johnson, 337-4367

Walt Gleason, 337-4479

~ The Deacons

The Friends of the Heath Free Public Library

ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND BAKE SALE

Saturday, May 28, 9:30 a.m. to noon
Sawyer Hall Front Porch

Come and support your library and treat yourself to the best baked goods in town and for non-sugar eaters, delicious individual pizzas!

If you bake for the sale, please deliver on
Saturday morning.

Grass Roots Democracy

Town Meeting coming up! Just its mention conjures up sights, sounds, smells, and tastes as I recall

Town Meeting day in the 1930s -a day-off from school so elementary school students could attend and observe democracy at its most basic level. (As I recall it was on the first Tuesday in February at 10:00 a.m. after the farmers' milking chores were finished, and it was an all-day affair.) Ruth Johnson remembers attending in 8th grade, taking notes for a report she had to make for her teacher.

In some respects this had an "Old Home Day" atmosphere; the men discussing their concerns about milk prices, the cost of cattle feed, etc. before the meeting was called to order. Often the meeting was cut and dried but occasionally a newcomer would question certain actions and that ruffled feathers.

Oscar Landstrom, Ruth's Dad, always said "this was a good thing as it got more people interested enough to attend." Budget items in the Annual Town Report were discussed, including salaries paid for each worker. One of our senior citizens recalls a line item showing payment to Carl Smith for cleaning the Branch School toilets, and someone from the audience asking, "Are you qualified, Carl?" So many names come to mind and I can see them these years later: Clyde Varney, Oscar Thompson, Dana Malone, Ray Dickinson, Herbert Smith, to name a few.

The Town Reports in those days were very detailed. Ruth Johnson and I remembered how we enjoyed reading the Vital Statistics- births, deaths, and marriages in the previous year, the Librarian's report of the number of books read by the students in the four schools with awards given for those with the highest number. (Pearl Tanner was the Librarian for many years.)

Most of the voters were men because the women, with few exceptions, were downstairs in the kitchen preparing the dinner. If some important issue was pending, one of the ladies would go up and report back to the rest. As the girls got older we would help out in the kitchen, set the tables, and serve as waitresses. How vivid a memory I have as I reached that age- the smell of the coffee brewing in a huge copper boiler on the back of the stove, a bag of grounds in the water and egg shells floating on top to absorb the bitter oils. I recall the sounds of ladies chatting and gossiping, the tastes as we sampled the various dishes. (See below a sample menu as recorded by Grace Landstrom, Ruth Johnson's mother) . Early on "the day," as the women arrived to prepare the meal, it was so cold in the kitchen and dining room, because the space hadn't been used since the fall, that as the ovens and stoves were heating up water from the steam ran down the walls.

For those not around before remodeling of the present Town Hall (Sawyer Hall) here is a brief description as I remember it. As you entered the front door, the library was on the right as it is today, though smaller, the Selectmen's meeting room was on the left where the Post Office is now, another office or two beyond that, and straight ahead was the door to the dining room and kitchen. To the right of that door were the stairs leading up to the large meeting room on the right, a coat room/storage room on the left and behind that, a pool room. (we girls were not allowed in there, though we sneaked a peek now and then)

Off of the kitchen was a small toilet, handy for the kitchen workers but awkward for everyone else.

How were Town Meetings in the decades prior to the 1930s? For some clues I returned to my Grandmother Sarah Benson Stetson's scrapbook which contained clippings from the *Greenfield Gazette* and the *North Adams Transcript*. They made several references to meetings, the earliest being 1883. At that time an adjourned meeting was called for the first Monday in April- "Every voter should try and attend... as there are questions to come up that interest them." And in 1885, "At the adjourned town meeting the town raised \$1200 for highways and bridges,\$600 for schools,\$300 for the poor, \$350 for town debt, \$330 for contingencies-total \$2800. The town voted to celebrate the centennial, about Sept. 1st,and chose a committee of five, of which Charles B. Cutler is the Corresponding Secretary, to make arrangements for it. ...". In 1896 a brief reminder that on the day of the annual town meeting, the ladies will provide a dinner for all, as usual, at the Union Church dining room." (Can anyone recall a dining room ever at the Union church?) In 1889 "The town meeting to be held on the 28th (which month?) to decide whether the town will accept of certain new roads as laid out by the selectmen. One, the principle and longest, runs from the new bridge near Henry Fairbanks' mill to a point in the present highway west of Geo. Carpenter's, and is over a mile in length. Another is west of the present "Trask Hill" road, and is to avoid that hill. The other is north of G.G. Gould's house, and is calculated to avoid the great drift that appears in that locality every winter. The cost of the whole will probably be from \$1500 to \$2000. The question comes up: Are the taxpayers of this town ready to vote for the Fairbanks-Carpenter road and increase our tax to the amount of \$1 on every \$100 of property?" A note in 1887-"Town meeting passed off very quietly-something that has not occurred for several years before." In 1891-"Town meeting passed off without any bones being broken." Most every town officer was changed. There was no time to finish, so the meeting adjourned to Thursday, March 12, 10 O'clock in the am. Another town meeting is called for the same day with several articles in the warrant to act upon." 1897, "Another town meeting called for Wednesday, the 22nd; everybody wants to be there."1902-"Only about one-half of the voters in Heath took part in the state elections on Nov. 4. This should not be. It is the duty of every tax-payer to attend all town meetings and look well into the affairs of the town. Then they would have some idea where the money goes, and there would be less grumbling about tax rates. Would it not be best for all to attend town meetings or ever after stop their grumbings?" The final clipping was in 1920: "The time for choosing town officers is near at hand, Heath remaining quiet as the present board of officers has faithfully done their duty."

All of these accounts bring me to May, 2011- Are we going to turn out in significant numbers? Can you imagine coming anywhere near the numbers that turned out even in the 1950s as reported by Grace Landstrom? She noted that, in 1952, 100 people "mostly adults" were served at the dinner and in 1959, 80-90 were served. And these were weekdays! Now our meetings are held on Saturdays, usually over by 12 noon with no dinner, just beverages and pastries provided by the

("Grass Roots Democracy" continued on page 4)

Harvest News from Berkshire Sweet Gold Maple & Carbon Farm

When late January rolls around each year, we begin our familiar ritual of studying weather forecasts in anticipation of sugaring. We also strap on our snowshoes and walk alongside the roughly 30 miles of sap tubing, looking for major breaks and, hopefully, beginning to pack trails for tapping that will soon begin. It is an optimistic time: the days are lengthening and we know that the fun and labor of sugaring will soon sweep us up.

Our patch of forest, like other areas in Heath, is still experiencing the impact of the 2008 ice storm. Some areas are almost impassible due to tree fall. This is certainly true in summertime and during the winter, the tangle poses unseen hazards for snowshoeing. The loss of those trees for harvesting sap continues to be experienced by us over the years. Moreover, it is also almost certain that our forest is now carbon positive, meaning it is likely producing more CO₂ than it can sequester. However, we've already begun to see that some trees are taking advantage of the new space and are branching out to increase their canopy. Certainly, the little critters seem to appreciate the brush (not to mention that scampering about on fallen limbs raises them up closer to the sap lines which they like to chew on!).

This winter brought lots of snow to Heath, making work in the woods especially challenging. Even on snowshoes there have been many times I have taken a step and sunk all the way in! At the same time, we're thankful when altitude is on our side, as this deep snow pack will help keep the harvest going when sugar-houses at lower elevations may be finished.

We were done tapping by March 1 and had our first boil about a week later. Since that day we haven't stopped making syrup. Our line system is on vacuum, and with regular repairs, we've been able to maintain a strong vacuum which dramatically helps yield. The use of reverse osmosis powered by electricity – offset by our solar panels on 8A – has allowed us to continue making 15 gallon batches in roughly 30 to 45 minutes, using less oil for the evaporator. The forecast for the coming week looks favorable and we're optimistic that this will be a good harvest year, helping us to pursue some exciting new endeavors...!

(Final note: Something we should all be on the lookout for are Asian Longhorned Beetles which have been found in Massachusetts. Here are two important websites where you can learn more: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ALB>
<http://beetlebusters.aphis.usda.gov/>)

~ Janis Steele

I Drive a Snowplow

Well, no kidding, you might say. Actually this is the opening line of one of my most favorite songs by Fred Eaglesmith. Recently while driving my snowplow I've seen frost heaves, ice, mud, downed trees, and lots of wildlife here in Heath. I've even seen a few animals. Like most of us, by March I have had just about enough winter, and I start to dislike all of the snow, ice, and frost heaves. Then we get a day like this one (I am writing this on March 17 and it is 44 degrees out and sunny!) and I remember what it is that I love so much about this town. I have

bumped into several people today around town and each one had a smile, no complaints about anything.

My wife is always telling me to "think positive." Well, this is positively a wonderful town, snow and all. When I drive around and around plowing and sanding I often see amazing things. I see small children playing outside, safe from the noise and problems of large cities, people walking to pick up their mail and visiting in the Town Hall, instead of fighting for elbow room in a lobby, skiers taking advantage of fresh snow, to ski where no chairlift can reach them. Sometimes I even see snowmobilers zipping along a road. This used to anger me but not anymore. Now I just smile and think, isn't it nice to live where you can still do that, at least once in a while.

Growing up in Heath was perfect for me. Of course, I didn't know anything different but even if I had I would not have changed a thing. I grew up on my family's small farm helping my father and grandfather. I learned how to fish, bale hay, cut wood, and feed chickens and cows. Then, of course, I learned where beef and chicken really came from (and I don't mean Stop & Shop). Some people might be offended at that so I apologize but I wish I still did it like Dad and Grandpa did. I also was educated in the art of making maple syrup, something that I am now teaching my children, and even though they have things that I didn't, like the Internet and iPods, they still love good old-fashioned work, sometimes, much to my delight.

So, as I drive around in my snowplow, rather than dwell on how cold it is or how much snow we have, even though I do sometime complain about it, I can see the beauty of this town everyday, beauty in my family, beauty in this community, and even beauty in all that snow.

Normally when I write an article for the *Herald* I offer unsolicited advice on something, such as, how to burn brush safely or what type of snow tire to buy. Today, however, I was just stuck thinking about how lucky we all are to live in such a beautiful place and wanted to share that with you. Being as I started this with Fred Eaglesmith I'll finish with the closing line from the same song. "Lately I've been thinking 'bout driving this snow plow straight into the sun."

~ Michael Smith

Fire Chief/ Highway Superintendent

("Grass Roots Democracy" continued from page 3)

"Friends of the Heath School Library"- donations gratefully accepted! See you at the 2011 Annual Town Meeting!

Menu for the 1952 Town Meeting Dinner

24 Doz. Rolls	4 lbs butter
12 loaves brown bread,	2 oleo
6 pans beans	3 lbs coffee
2 hams (15-15 1/2 lbs each)	4 pts bread & butter
	pickles
24 pies	cranberry jelly
12 quarts milk	10 cans peas
mashed potatoes (3/4 bu)	
1/2 bu carrots	

~Lois Stetson Buchiane

with comments from Ruth Johnson
and other Senior Citizens

Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee is now fully engaged in its busiest season of the year, working with the Selectboard to draw up the Town budget and estimate the tax rate that will be required to fund it. We are hampered this year by the fact that at this writing (late March) we still do not have a tax rate for the current fiscal year (FY 2011) that has been certified by the Commonwealth. We will be working with the Assessors and the Selectboard to resolve this problem so that we can make a clear presentation to the voters at the Annual Town Meeting on May 7, 2011.

In the meantime, we have been conducting budget hearings for Town department heads and assessing the Town's capital needs. The tax and budget situation is complicated this year by two large items, which we discuss below. Local aid is down about 3.6% in the Governor's first approximation to a recommended FY 2012 budget; Heath's assessment for the Mohawk Trail Regional School District is likely to drop by a small amount. We are considering some adjustments in the pay scales for Town employees that will add expense.

The first large item is the voters' decision at a Special Town Meeting in December 2010 to contribute \$140,000, one third of the total cost, for the Town of Charlemont to purchase the McCloud property in order to avoid liability to Heath, Hawley, and Charlemont arising from a potential lawsuit over pollution from the old Three-Town Landfill along Burrington Road in Heath and the Charlemont portion of Avery Brook Road. The voters decided to fund this with \$33,696 in fund transfers and a 10-year loan of \$106,304.

The second is a recommendation from the Library Trustees that the Town purchase the Mackie property at 4 E. Main Street for use as a Town Library and Town offices. The

purchase price and cost of renovation and repurposing this property is likely to be \$650,000: \$330,000 for the house and its accompanying five acres of land, and the balance for repurposing the structure so that it is suitable for a library and office space, and complies with state building codes for public spaces, etc. The reconstruction costs are based on estimates prepared by Brian DeVriese. Under the proposal that the FinCom and Selectboard are now considering, the Town would seek a 40-year mortgage from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the entire cost. The total would be reduced by a USDA grant of \$90,000 for which the Town would be eligible (although we must borrow the entire \$650,000 at the outset) and whatever the Library Trustees are able to raise by fund-raising and seeking grants.

This will be a very difficult call for the FinCom and Selectboard in the first instance, and, ultimately, for Town voters. The Mackie purchase is by no means a "done deal" until the voters decide on it. In developing a balanced and thorough worst-case assessment of the cost, however, we must proceed for now on the assumption that the project will go forward.

Most of us on the FinCom believe that this property is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the Town to obtain prime space at relatively low cost. The Mackie property is part of the Heath Center Historic District; it is centrally located and would expand what we think of as the center of town; its architecture is consistent with the buildings in the Historic District; it is well built for a potential library, with steel floor beams; its five acres of land will be a significant Town asset for likely future use; as a project that involves repurposing an historic structure for public use, it is a prime target for grants that will help defray the cost.

Against this must be set the fact that to accomplish this project, the Town must commit now to its entire cost, which, if the total is not reduced by grants and fund-raising, will mean, at present rates, a budget item of \$35,066 every year for the next 40 years at a time when we are already committed to an annual payment of \$11,108 for the next 10 years on Heath's share of the McCloud property. The Town would also permanently lose property tax revenue of about \$3,000 a year. The pinch of these two projects is eased a bit by the fact that FY 2013, the year in which payments on the Library project would begin, is also the last year of the Heath School mortgage payment of \$50,373 annually. The USDA grant – which is not certain but highly likely – and grants and other fund-raising activities will bring down the total, but we cannot count on any of these factors at the outset. It is a reasonable question whether this project is a "need" or a "want" for the Town. Equally reasonable is concern for the Town's other capital needs and the condition and utilization of the Town's buildings and office space considered as a whole.

("Finance Committee Report" continued on page 6)

Be a Local Hero
Please join us for a good cause,
and some great local food.

Pancake Breakfast Fund-raiser Heath Firefighters Association

**Heath Community Hall
Saturday April 16, 2011, 7:30-10:30 A.M.**

**Menu: pancakes, sausages, toppings
*prepared by the HFD crew**

**maple syrup produced in Heath, and surrounding hill towns.
Heath blueberries and Colrain apples will top off your pancakes
homemade sausage patties**

**Coffee Roasters fresh brewed coffee
Cost: \$7.00 adults \$5.00 (12 and under)
\$18.00.00 per family of 5 or more.**

Green Thoughts

Plants for Walls



By Pat Leuchtman

The stone wall is a New England icon. Our soil is rocky and early farmers spent a lot of time clearing planting and grazing fields of stones and piling them at the edges to make walls of varying durability. Actually, we New England gardeners are still pulling stones out of the soil and piling them where they won't be in the way, or using them as another resource.

Here at End of the Road Farm we have lots of stone walls at the edge of old fields, some of which have grown back into woodland. The old barn which was struck by lightning and burned down in 1990 left us with three five-foot-high stone walls. We have two dug wells lined with beautiful and amazing stone walls. I cannot imagine how they were built.

We have even built two small stone walls of our own to edge and hold the piazza pavers, and the new entry walkway pavers. Since the pavers are very regular and the stone walls are not, I have planted common thyme along the edge where they meet to disguise that irregular border. The thyme is handy for kitchen needs, and very pretty, when it is in purple summer bloom or not. Thyme is a big family of good low spreaders including wooly thyme, lemon thyme, French thyme, silver thyme, gold thyme, and more.

There are other plants that could act as this kind of filler. Rock cress, *Arabis alpine*, is a low-growing perennial with small white flowers that bloom in the spring. It likes sun or light shade and a well-drained soil which means that planting at the edge of a stone wall suits it very well. In case you want color there is a false rock cress, *Aubretia*, which is also low-growing but comes in a variety of blue, purple, and plummy colors. Butterflies love it.

Snow in Summer, *Cerastium tomentosum*, is similar with spring blooming white flowers. It likes hot dry places so planting by a stone wall is again ideal. Give it a shearing after it blooms for an attractive appearance in the summer.

Basket of Gold, *Alyssum compactum*, is very easy to grow. It was one of the plants in my very first garden back in 1965. I didn't have a clue about what to do, but this graceful 14-inch plant with its extravagant spring flowering didn't need any help from me. Cut it back by about one third after blooming.

Larger graceful plants that would be happy on top of a stone wall where the drainage is good are the catmints. Nepeta Walker's Low is not low, it is about 30-inch- tall with an equal spread. It was a Perennial Plant Association Plant of the Year in 2007 because it is beautiful and dependable in a wide variety of situations. I have only one caveat about catmints. Cats love them. My cats have lolled and rolled and slept on top of my catmint and killed it dead.

There are a number of sedums that are suitable for growing around a stone wall. *Sedum kamtschaticum* has scalloped yellow-green leaves and yellow flowers that mature to bronze. I have

this plant (I think it came from a plant swap) and it makes a good groundcover or plant for a wall. *Sedum Sieboldii* has gray-blue foliage with pinky gray flowers that appear later in the summer. It should not be deadheaded right after blooming, but cleaned up in the early spring. For even more color there is *Sedum spurium*, 'Dragons Blood' with red-edged foliage and red flowers in summer.

While the plants I have mentioned are all perennials and will come back year after year, there are familiar annuals that will also work well on a wall. Think about annuals that work in hanging baskets like petunias that come in a full range of color and form. Licorice plant, *Helichrysum petiolare*, has trailing, slightly fuzzy silvery or gold foliage that is often used with bloomers like petunias, verbena, and nasturtiums.

I love trailing verbena with its cascade of colors, pink, rose, red, purple, lavender, and white. The variety with a plummy purple is a standard at garden centers in the spring.

There is even an annual named *wallflower*, easily grown from seed. The old fashioned *Erysimum* grows about one- to two-foot- tall and has brilliant orange flowers in the spring. Pinch it back as it grows for a bushier plant.

Visit me at www.commonweeder.com.

PTP Fund-raiser

For community green thumbs, it is not too late to order FEDCO seeds. The school is putting together a second order. If you don't have a catalog, they are available online at FEDCO's website: <http://www.fedcoseeds.com>. Order and checks may be mailed or dropped off at the school: 18 Jacobs Road. Feel free to e-mail Carin Burnes with any questions: daisy-joy8@yahoo.com

("Finance Committee Report" continued on page 6)

Those of us who support this project – and the FinCom does not unanimously support it at this point – believe that the opportunity represented by the Mackie property is highly unlikely to come our way again, while realizing that this best of opportunities has come along at perhaps the worst of times. On balance, however, this project's supporters believe that the generations who follow us will honor the Town's willingness to step up now and support an action that exemplifies Heath's long-held community values. Heath is not only the town of Reinhold Niebuhr, Robert McAfee Brown, and Dr. Grace Wolcott – people who worked with their heads; it is the town as well of people who worked with their hands, the Heath of Carroll Stowe, Arthur Crowningshield, and Col. David Snow. The Library project, its supporters believe, keeps faith with both those Heath traditions. But make no mistake: it is not an easy choice.

Heath Finance Committee
 Don Freeman, Chair
 Janis Carr
 Dave Gott
 Jeff Simmons
 Ned Wolf, Secretary

**Wild Ramblings****This Land**

By Bill Lattrell



Along the western boundary of our land there is an old stone wall. This rock edifice, built to contain cattle and sheep by some unknown person of the distant past, stands out because it is incomplete. The wall is solid. It has withstood the test of time. In most areas the large rocks, some of which exceed several hundred pounds, fit together like the pieces of a puzzle. This wall has withstood the freezing and thawing of the earth over the last two hundred years, the change from pasture to forest, significant storms that have toppled trees, and human neglect. It is now part of the forest and holds wildlife within its crevices and shadows. Many of the rocks are covered with green moss and white- and olive-colored lichen giving the hard surface a soft texture. The wall serves as a rough and tumble highway for bobcats and fox who use it to navigate and hunt this forest. These arranged rocks are now part of the substance of these woods. The wall is several thousand feet long and serves as a modern property boundary between our land and two neighbors. At about the midpoint in its north to south traverse the wall has a large break. It looks as if two different people built the wall from opposite directions and constructed the wall on a different but parallel course. The end result is a gap between the two walls that creates a ninety-degree angle of nothingness. It has occurred to me that this gap may have been intentional. Maybe it was meant to act as a passage for livestock. The question remains that if this hypothesis were true why wouldn't the builder of this wall simply have left a gap in wall on the same plane? Why would the wall have two ends that are at ninety degrees to each other without joining?

Over the past thirty-five years I have puzzled over this misaligned wall. I have looked at this irregularity from every angle. I have asked neighbors whose families have long been associated with their land and who had no answers. I have looked for clues by examining other stone walls in the area without uncovering anything. I have come to the conclusion that this will remain a mystery. I am not surprised. These woods hold many unknowns.

This land holds secrets that will be kept. It holds stories that will never be uncovered by me, and will likely never be discovered by anyone else. Animals wander these woods unnoticed and unrecorded. Fields, long ago turned to forest, will likely remain wooded. Trees, harvested hundreds of years ago when these pastures were created, are long forgotten. It matters not, at least to me, for this land holds a piece of my soul that will forever be held as part of its character.

I was twenty-three years old when I found this place. These raw woods on a north-facing slope were unattractive to others. It held little sun during the day. The slope was formidable and was difficult to navigate. It was cold. There are enormous amounts of bugs in the spring. The fact that neighbors were few was not viewed as a plus by some. I saw the land differently. It held wildlife. It held a brook where water ran clean, and it held a mountain top where the northwest wind could refresh your spirit. It held hundreds of plants and a beautiful hardwood and mixed hardwood/conifer forest. It held springs that ran year-round with clean, healthy groundwater. It held a hilltop to which I could climb and see the distant views to the east. It held the opportunity to make this part of the world my home. It held future blisters on my hands that would turn to callous. It held hope. It held a future.

The bright side of being twenty-three years old is that you are young and full of energy and major obstacles go unnoticed. I had no money, but I had a job. The land was inexpensive. My grandmother, who had a meager bank account, offered to give me a short-term loan for the down payment. The payments stretched out over a ten-year period were affordable even though I had a bad-paying job working with young people who lived in poverty. I couldn't afford to pay rent and make payments on the land simultaneously so I erected a tipi and lived on this land. For two years I slept on the ground, got up every morning, and went to work. Sleeping on the ground allows you to breathe in the fresh musky smell of humus at night while you sleep; allowing a deep and meditative respite from the troubles of the political world. My two dogs (Hickory and Scruggs) and I enjoyed each and every sunrise and sunset. We often climbed to a place in the morning where we could watch the sun rise over distant mountains. On weekends I cleared land and established a building site. Logs were hauled out and turned to lumber. My effort, sweat and blistered hands, was my primary investment. The work gave me strength and the land and I understood that we could get along.

The good times were many. I caught trout in the stream. The dogs and I took long hikes and explored the thousands of acres of woodland surrounding us. I picked ramps, nettles, cattail shoots, and fiddleheads for food. The dogs chased squirrels, dug up groundhogs, and occasionally filled their leathery noses with porcupine quills. On hot summer days we sat in a deep pool in the babbling brook, and on cold winter nights we all huddled together by a rock-lined fire in the tipi.

At some point I realized that I was a bit lonely. I needed someone to share all of this with. As luck would have it I met a wonderful woman at work. It took us a while to get together because we were both a tad shy. Finally a friend arranged a first date. The first date lasted three days. We are still together thirty-some-odd years later.

(*"This Land"* continued on page 11)

Managing Smart Growth For Heath

Some years ago your Planning Board surveyed town residents to determine how they wanted to develop our community. The overwhelming sentiment was that they like it just the way it is – rural in nature and sensitive to environmental issues.

One vehicle for maintaining this rural character was our bylaw that limited building permits to six per year. The Attorney General of Massachusetts permitted this with the proviso that it would be a stopgap measure to allow the Planning Board time to develop alternative approaches toward growth and development.

To address this requirement, your Planning Board obtained a State grant through the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to hire Peggy Sloan, FROCG'S Director, to investigate and develop a number of alternatives.

Our criteria were:

1. To Protect open space, forest, and farmland.
2. To Encourage "Conservation" Development.
3. To Promote affordable housing options - including senior housing.

Proposed Changes to Heath Zoning Bylaw

Within these guidelines we developed a proposed model to achieve these goals.

Zoning Changes

Currently the minimum lot size for all of Heath with the exception of Mohawk Estates is two acres. We propose no change in the current zoning for all parcels within 650 feet of any public way in Heath. This area is designated as District A.

The minimum lot size for all other land in Heath (where subdivisions would be built) will increase to four acres. (District B.)

Conservation development bylaw

Our goal is to avoid houses being spread, one to every four acres, on a subdivision site. Therefore, we propose a number of incentives for conservation development:

- * Allowed by right, with Site Plan Review, in districts A & D, eligible for density bonuses of up to 40% for preservation of more open space.
- * Preservation of large contiguous plots of land adjacent to open space or recreation areas.
- * Provision for affordable housing units (at least 20% of units affordable).
- * Single family or two-family dwellings allowed.
- * Perk tests not required at Preliminary Plan stage.

If a builder agrees to cluster houses and take advantage of other incentives, he could increase density and provide more open space as follows:

Minimum lot size - 3/4 acre.
Front setback - 40 feet.
Side and rear setbacks - 25 feet.

A complete draft of the proposed bylaw changes is available at the Town offices in Sawyer Hall and on the Town Web site. Please feel free to contact a member of the Planning Board for more information.

The Planning Board
~ Calvin Carr, Chair 337-5747
Doug Mason 339-4756
Dino Schnelle 337-5393
Jo Travis 339-8349
Bob Viarengo 337-8619

FUNDING NOW AVAILABLE! HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is administering deferred payment loans on behalf of the town of Heath. Income eligible applicants who qualify for a full-deferred payment loan will be able to borrow up to \$30,000.00. This is a 0% interest, deferred payment loan, the loan is secured by a lien placed on your property, and the loan is due when you sell or transfer the property. The goal of this program is to enable low to moderate-income homeowners to bring their homes into code compliance. Examples of eligible work include: Roof replacement, foundation repairs, electrical and plumbing, windows, wells, septic replacement and much more!

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

<u># In Household</u>	<u>Gross Annual Income</u>
1	\$43,800.00
2	\$50,050.00
3	\$56,300.00
4	\$62,550.00
5	\$67,600.00
6	\$72,600.00
7	\$77,600.00
8	\$82,600.00

If you are interested in receiving an information and application packet please contact: Charity @ (413) 863-9781 ext. 132 or cday@fchra.org

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Richard C. Bishop Elder Law Attorney

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- Contact us about the spread, this year's fresh blueberry harvest, walking this beautiful land, or to see how you can assist in the community effort to preserve the farm.
- Box 89, 182 Flagg Hill Road, Heath, MA 01346
(413) 337-5340, www.bensonplace.org or benplace@gis.net



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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.

Heath Fair News

Since it began nearly a century ago, the Heath Fair has been an agricultural fair. The purpose of the Agricultural Society that organizes the Fair is to promote and showcase local farming. Among regional town fairs, the Heath Fair, is unique in its sustained focus on agriculture. We continue to be listed in the Massachusetts Registry of Fairs as one of the region's major agricultural fairs. Of the two major grants we seek each year, one, from the Wells Trust, is devoted to encouraging and supporting interest in farming and related arts among children and youth. The other, from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, supports all other premiums and is specifically intended to support the agricultural nature of the Fair. That's fine with members of the Heath Agricultural Society. We love Heath Fair Music, and the array of vendors and attractions the Fair offers, but we are committed to preserving and developing its agricultural mission. We are grateful for the essential support these two foundations provide to support and sustain these efforts. This year's Fair is scheduled for **August 19-21**.

New Projects

As soon as the ice is out of the ground, work will begin on the Rabbit and Poultry Barn expansion. Justin Lively (413 834-0168) is managing the project and will be looking for skilled volunteers. The plan is to double the size of the barn and to add some secure storage space. Our rabbit entries have been multiplying in the past few years like, well, rabbits. In addition, this year we voted to add turkeys to the poultry exhibit. The additional barn space will help us accommodate more entries and house them throughout the weekend.

Sheila Litchfield is working on organizing an official goat show. It will take place on Saturday of the Fair. We hope it will help us fill the animal barns. Sheep and cattle will continue to be shown. Sheila is looking for a goat show secretary who can be available Saturday of the Fair. You can reach her at 337-4957.

Heath Fair Dirty Little Secret

Well, maybe it not so little. Running a fair can be a dirty business. Each year the Heath Fair generates truckloads of trash. While we have made progress in going green, like many people, we have never given waste management the kind of concerted responsible attention it really requires. Thanks to the Heath School sixth grade, for the past couple of years we have been able to collect and sort recyclable and redeemable bottles and cans. In addition, we require that our vendors use recyclable and compostable serving utensils. But truthfully, we still have a long way to go to match the efforts of other area fairs and festivals. For example, Wendell's Garlic and Arts Festival has reduced the amount of trash it sends to the landfill to just, yes sir, yes sir, three bags full! The Agricultural Society is seeking an individual or group that would like to help us ramp up our efforts at running a cleaner, greener fair. Please contact Justin Lively or Pam Porter (413 337-5525) if you have interest, energy, and ideas to help us clean up our act!

Sumer is Icumen In

Our next Fair meeting is on Wednesday, April 20, 7:00 p.m., at the Heath School. Workbees commence in May. All stored vehicles need to be off the grounds by May 1 (or as soon thereafter as the snow is gone!)

Pam Porter
Co-President

(*"This Land"* continued from page 7)

Maureen wasn't fond of my tipi. I've never understood why and likely never will. We built a little two room cabin and lived in it while we built our house. Maureen took this place to be home almost immediately. She worked the soil with her hands and grew vegetables. She helped me dig a well by hand. She moved rocks with a crowbar and hung fence on fence posts. She worked with me side by side for two years while we built our house one loving board at a time. Livestock, more gardens, and children followed in that order. This land that held opportunity now held our dreams.

And all these years later tall trees that reach for the sun are still held by this land. White-tailed deer that drink from the groundwater springs and painted trilliums that brighten an early

spring day still thrive on this land. This land still holds a frothy brook that runs freely and wildly. A cool northwest breeze and hard unforgiving soils are still part of this land. The old lichen covered stone wall that has two ends that do not meet in the middle is still found on the western boundary. And from this vantage point the sun can be seen setting through the hardwood forest at the end of every sunny day.

And I, a weathered man who still wanders the forest, who listens to the cry of bobcats and the wails of eastern coyotes, who has buried some of this best animal friends here, and who is still in love with the same wonderful woman, am still and forever will be a part of this land. Of that I am sure.

Fiddlers

Broadway premieres have nothing on the Heath School's dramatic productions. There was standing room only at their most recent show, an abbreviated, but embellished version of *Fiddler on the Roof* named *The Fiddlers of Anatevka*. Why have only one fiddler when you can have more?

The all-star cast was comprised of every age student, from the youngest to the oldest. This was a high energy show that perhaps could only be put on by elementary school students, singing and dancing, emoting, dreaming, and speaking up so that everyone could hear. There was laughter and tears; when adults listen to a first grader sing *Sunrise, Sunset*, something profound takes place.

The play was creatively produced with wonderful costumes, ingenious sets, and beautiful effects as when the villagers, warned of the approaching Cossacks, pack up and leave. The audience watched through the windows as a slow line of villagers carrying lanterns departed and began their journey into the dark winter night.

This is the seventh season for Heath School's Drama Program. The parents and other adults who have worked with the children since before Christmas deserve their own round of applause for guiding the students through a demanding project and bringing delight to the greater community.

~ Pat Leuchtman



Photographs by Lorena Loubsky

Parent Teacher Partnership

Our last couple of meetings have been focused on upcoming enrichment and fund-raising ideas as well as further reflection on ways we can support school and community partnership.

We are looking forward to having members of the Wholesale Klezmer Band come to the school in follow-up to their participation in the *Fiddlers of Anatevka*. They will bring their stories, music, and educational program into the classrooms sometime this spring. We are also helping fund Ted Watt's time working with students and sharing his incredible expertise and passion for the natural world with the students. We'll be kicking off a flower bulb fund-raiser soon to benefit the school and will have order forms available at the Town Hall and School.

If you are interested in visiting for an "all-school" gathering, sharing your expertise with the school, or coming for one of Loralyn's scrumptious school breakfasts or lunches, don't hesitate to call Kathy at school, 337-5307. Save the date for our **Community Astronomy Night** in honor of Clark Johnson at school on Friday, May 6, with a Saturday rain date.

~ Lorena Loubsky
School Community Relations

Local Education Council

Our last couple of months have been focused on addressing the challenges of school funding cuts proposed for the coming year. Thanks to the many folks who came to the public budget hearing at Mohawk last month and special thanks to the School Committee members and Selectboard who all work tirelessly as educational and community advocates.

At the meeting, some questions were raised relative to how enrollment projection data is compiled and its relevance in determining cost-per-pupil. We shared our concerns with the School Committee that utilizing cost-per-pupil as a basis for developing a budget results in cuts that are educationally damaging and do not recognize the diseconomies of scale inherent in rural school districts. In addition, we asked that in future budget deliberations, the towns and LECs be provided with a budget proposal that compares actual amended budget figures, the one proposed versus the prior year's voted budget, and that there be greater transparency. Continuing our goal of celebrating the strengths of all our unique schools and building partnership throughout the district community remain central to our dialogue and planning.

Other topics we continue to work on are the classroom grade configurations, school improvement plan evaluation, and implementing and supporting our school staff and leadership in the context of challenging fiscal times. Principal Jeanine Heil facilitated a positive meeting with families and staff to receive feedback and input pertaining to the school drop-off policy.

Please feel free to come to any monthly LEC meeting or to share your thoughts with the Principal or other LEC members. We are looking for a community member to join our council. Please call Kathy or Jeanine if interested.

~ Lorena Loubsky

School Committee Update

There is good news to report. The 2012 School Budget has been approved by the Mohawk School Committee. Now, it goes to each town to be voted on at their Annual Town Meetings. The budget is a level funded budget. That being said, it does mean there will be a decrease in staff and/or staff hours. Also, for Heath it does mean that our assessment will be lower for the Mohawk School District. We believe that this will help the Town deal with the cuts that are pending from the State.

There were some concerns about the number of preschool students that might be starting at Heath Elementary this fall. We do understand the concerns about the differences in the numbers between what the District came up with and what the Town submitted. We did find out that putting either number in the equation is still going to mean one teacher. We will be paying close attention to whose numbers are closer when school opens this fall.

The Education Subcommittee has been busy meeting once again with the different school administrations and their LECs to look at their respective School Improvement Plans. Meeting with different LECs has brought up questions about exactly how they are made up and what laws and policies govern them. This is a subject that the School Committee will follow up on.

Rebecca Allen has been attending the CES (Collaborative for Educational Services) meetings. With the CES representing both Hampshire and Franklin Counties it is hard to stay objective about things. The Collaborative was started with just Hampshire County being represented so, in some cases, I feel like we are the low people on the totem pole and don't count for as much. Of course there are some instances where it seems like they go out of their way to accommodate Franklin County School Districts. They are coming through with their budget for the fiscal 2012 year.

The Building Subcommittee has been busy choosing candidates to help us move forward with the MSBA Green Repair program. The State has stimulus monies available to help with roof replacements and windows in some the buildings in the District. We are still waiting for Siemen's to provide us their energy audit results.

The 3D Transportation Subcommittee has not met since last publication. We were scheduled to meet on March 30.

Heath Elementary School is looking for some interest from the Heath community. They need a community member for their LEC (Local Education Council). This is a wonderful opportunity to be involved with the local school. This is also a great opportunity to wear multiple hats by looking out for the Heath children and the Heath taxpayers. It involves attending one LEC meeting a month as well as volunteering to represent the Heath LEC at some of the School Committee meetings. If you are interested, please contact Jeanine Heil at (413) 337-5307.

We will keep you updated as to what is going on with School Committee. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments. We are here to voice your opinions and concerns.

Town of Heath
Mohawk Trail School Committee Reps.
Ann Pacino
Rebecca L. Allen



By Jeanine Heil, Principal

I don't know about the rest of the Heath staff, parents, and students, but I cannot believe that we have already reached spring! I feel like we just started the school year. What an amazing year it has been!

Our Local Education Council (LEC) recently presented the progress we have been making on our School Improvement Plan (SIP). This year we have five goals that were established. I'd like to take this time to highlight the progress we have made.

Goal 1 – All students will be educated in safe environments that promote learning.

Presently we have 100% of staff utilizing Responsive Classroom during the school day. All classroom teachers begin the day with a morning meeting. Classes use a concept called “traveling rules” where they physically carry their classroom rules to art, music, library, and PE which assists specialist teachers in maintaining consistent expectations. Heath School also continues to have All School Meetings every Friday morning and classes take turns facilitating these meetings. Families and community members are always welcome to join us for these gatherings.

To meet Goal 1 staff also wanted to teach students sportsmanship and how to enjoy opportunities at recess. We started the year with a recess walk-through to review choices and expectations at recess. All school meetings have been utilized twice this year as check-ins for recess play. During these meetings, staff role-played various scenarios surrounding winter activities at recess (sledding, fort creation, etc). Mary Johansmeyer, our PE teacher, taught the older students cross-country skiing. During the winter, on the days she is at Heath, the students were given ski equipment to use at recess. Suzanne Crawford, our preschool teacher, also taught her students to cross-country ski.

Goal 2 – All students will be provided diverse learning opportunities

A focus for teachers this year was to analyze grade level writing samples and use that information to target instruction. Teachers administered an on-demand writing prompt in December where the children were given a prompt and had up to 45 minutes to respond to it. These writing samples were scored by teams of teachers using a writing continuum developed by experts at Columbia University at the February in-service day. A spring on-demand writing piece will be given in May or June and scored to measure student progress.

Since math has been a focus for this school year, the children have been participating in “Math Partners.” The entire school meets in the open space every Thursday at 2:30 where students participate in problem solving games and fast fact practice. This has been a fun new twist on our previously implemented “reading buddies.”

Heath School has also continued to offer a wide variety of enrichment activities for the children. Soccer took place in the fall. Students have participated in basketball, dance, karate, drama, and an environmental club. The Heath Horizons Organization works to locate grants and raise money to support the drama, strings, and a yearlong partnership with Ted Watt from the Hitchcock Center. Ted's work takes place during the school day so that all students may participate, including preschoolers. We also have a partnership with the Student Conservation Association where our friends Amy and Elizabeth worked in classrooms every Wednesday and Thursday through the end of March.

Goal 3 – All students will be taught by highly qualified and inspiring staff.

Activities targeting this goal have been our achieving NAEYC accreditation in January. Our teachers and paraprofessionals have participated in monthly training sessions focusing on math instruction. Additionally, teachers in grades K-6 have been working on the implementation of a new math series. A trainer from Houghton Mifflin has visited the school to work with staff individually and in small groups to assist them in this process.

Goal 4 – All students will reach high standards across the curriculum

One of our goals this year was to improve communication and reporting to parents around their child's progress in school. Teachers have utilized a new district-wide report card. Classroom teachers and administration have had discussions on developing report card comments that effectively communicate a child's strengths and areas of need.

Goal 5 – The district will foster a culture of community building.

To achieve this goal the school worked to establish leadership teams to assist in the effective implementation of enrichment opportunities for students. A garden leadership team meets every Friday to discuss how to maximize the potential of the school garden. The strings leadership team has had two meetings since the start of the program this school year. Part of the task of this group was to plan for fund-raising events.

As you can see, it has been an extremely busy and productive school year. We still have three months remaining which will include the upcoming MCAS assessment, Field Day, baseball season, and training utilizing a new literacy assessment tool. What a terrific group of teachers, paraprofessionals, students, and parents!

Winter Time Fun and Learning at the Heath Preschool

Winter is a joyful season for young children, and one of the real treats of teaching in a preschool classroom is the opportunity to see the world anew through their eyes. At an age when shoveling snow is a treat and moving on and through snow is a happy adventure, every day offers exciting possibilities. We've

(“Winter Time Fun” continued on page 15)

(*"Winter Time Fun" continued from page 14*)

had great fun skiing and snowshoeing, climbing and sliding, making snow angels and snowmen. But even on the crustiest of recent days, we have had a wonderful time crawling and pretending to be kitties and puppies on the snow. Young children are blessed with the ability to find joy everywhere – even in the simplest things – and it can serve as a great reminder to the rest of us to follow their example!

We had a visit from Ted Watt, our wonderful naturalist friend from the Hitchcock Center, to learn about animal tracks and the ways different animals move. After trying out moving like "waddlers," "bounders," "hoppers," etc., we headed outside to look for animal tracks. While outside we came upon a snow "cave" made by some of the older students, and listened to the story of bears hibernating and how the babies are born in the winter. Then we got to take turns being baby bears in the cave getting ready for spring – and amazingly we found out that some baby bears snore!!

Inside we are thinking ahead to spring with some indoor gardening projects. We are measuring and graphing the growth of two amaryllis plants and were all thrilled to see that one flower stalk grew from 6 to 27 inches in the two weeks that spanned the February vacation! Maybe it will start to bloom soon. We also have planted two window boxes for an indoor garden with different kinds of peas and beans. They are coming up now and should be ready to harvest for snacks in May.

We make a lot of books in the preschool. Some are photo books of activities we've done with stories about those activities. Others are journals that each child works on throughout the year with drawings and stories. We are also working on some books about ourselves. These will include drawings of us and our families, stories accompanying photos of our families, pets, and houses, and information about some of our favorite things. If you are planning to come to the Heath School and would like to stop by or read some of our books, just give a call to plan a time.

~ Suzanne Crawford

Prime Red News

The second graders have been working on various science topics lately in the classroom. We are growing amaryllis flowers, doing sound and light experiments, and had a visit from one of our parents, Janis Steele, who demonstrated how maple syrup is tested using a hydrometer and a refractor.

Our amaryllis flowers were purchased four years ago using a Mary Lyon Teacher Center Grant. We have measured our flower stems every day as they grow and we document their growth on line graphs the students created. Some of the interesting observations this year have been: the difference in length of stems, the variety of flower blooms, and the lack of flower buds on some of our plants. We will do a culminating art and writing project illustrating the beautiful flowers we raised.

Our SCA members Amy and Elizabeth have helped teach us several science experiments on sound and light. We studied materials and sorted them into groups that reflect light, absorb light, and allow light to pass through. We made solar ovens which we plan to use to melt and/or cook foods. Our sound unit involved learning about sound waves, pitch, and volume. We made musical instru-

ments out of recycled materials as a culminating activity.

Our students enjoyed a visit from Janis Steele, Gavin's mom, who showed us how to use a hydrometer to measure the sugar content of maple syrup and sap. She told us about their family's maple syrup business. We learned that many math activities are performed regularly to insure the proper boiling and making of their syrup. We are hoping to visit their maple sugar house soon.

~ Virginia Gary, Teacher

Middles Class Studies

In the Middles Class (Grades 3-4) we have been studying the United States. First, we looked at regions and states and learned how to use an atlas and maps. We created individual State travel brochures after doing some in-depth research. We also read books about immigration and learned about the many people who settled America. Then we researched our own family trees and looked at where our family originally came from.

We are finishing up our studies of the USA by focusing on the Iditarod, the amazing 1,000 mile dogsled race in Alaska. Each student followed a musher throughout the race.

We read many books about Alaska, used maps, did math problems relating to the race, and are writing our own stories. It has been an inspiration and a chance to look at how brave people can be in some incredible wintry conditions

~ Jorie Macleod, Teacher

Fifth Grade is Energized!

The Fifth Dimension (fifth grade) has been involved in many exciting learning explorations this winter. We are in the middle of an energy unit in science where we are learning about the distinct characteristics of light, sound, electricity, and magnetism. Each fifth grader developed an experiment about sound to test hypotheses that they created. An example hypothesis is that wire will carry sound vibrations better than string in a 'string and cup telephone.' We then tested our hypotheses. Generating these hypotheses has led to some thoughtful, probing, and downright interesting science discussions!

~ Meghan Bone, Teacher

Heath School 6th Grade Heads To Washington, D.C.

The 6th grade at Heath Elementary School headed to Washington D.C in early April. Our nation's capitol offers students a chance to learn that it is possible to expand their horizons to include places far from home. Students experienced the abundance of our national culture and identity, were exposed to the beautiful design of the city and its multicultural population, the free museums offering vast amounts of wisdom on the natural world and achievements of humanity, and saw the seat of our federal government and the physical representations of its three branches. The far reaching explorations in Washington truly earned!

~ Katie Natale, Teacher



Library Lines

A New Home for the Library

By Donald Purington



Please come to one or more of the scheduled information sessions to learn more about the proposal to purchase the house and land at 4 East Main Street to be used for the new Library and for other town uses. Also, be sure to attend the Annual Town Meeting on May 7 to cast your votes for this project.

“Every child begins the world again....” ~Henry David Thoreau

The library is a place where people come seeking information. The number one reference question at the Heath Library in the middle of February was “Has she had her baby yet?” We happily welcome our newest library patron, Jupiter Bowie Clark Johnson-Fuller, son of our Library Assistant, Lyra Johnson, and Ed Fuller.

A Few of the New Items at the Library:

Adult Fiction Books: *The Saturday Big Tent Wedding Party (No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency)* by Alexander McCall Smith, *Started Early, Took My Dog* by Kate Atkinson, *The Troubled Man* by Henning Mankell, *A Lesson in Secrets (Maisie Dobbs)* by Jacqueline Winspear, *Fifth Witness* by Michael Connelly

Adult Nonfiction Books: *Town Meeting: Practicing Democracy in Rural New England* by Donald Robinson (former Ashfield selectman), *Backyard Sugarin': A Complete How-To Guide* by Rink Mann, 56: *Joe DiMaggio and the Last Magic Number in Sports* by Kostya Kennedy, *Slow Cooker Revolution* by the Editors at America's Test Kitchen, and *Morning Song: Poems for New Parents* edited by Susan Todd and Carol Purington (the book will be available at the end of April)

Young Adult Books: *13 Planets: The Latest View of the Solar System* by David A. Aguilar, *Classic Myths to Read Aloud* edited by William F. Russell, *The Darlings are Forever* by Melissa Kantor, *Clockwork Angel* by Cassandra Clare, *Artsy-Fartsy* by Karla Oceanak

Children's Books: *Jupiter: The Largest Planet* by Daisy Allyn, *Little White Rabbit* by Kenneth Henkes, *I Didn't Do It* by Patricia MacLachen, *Planting the Wild Garden* by Kathryn O. Galbraith, *Interrupting Chicken* by David E. Stein

DVDs: *Red* starring Bruce Willis, Morgan Freeman, and Helen Mirren, *The Social Network*, *No Impact Man*, *Enlighten Up!*, *Downton Abbey*, and *Yoga for the Rest of Us: Easy Yoga for Arthritis*

Big News at the Heath Library

At this year's Annual Town Meeting, you will be asked to make a critical vote for the future of the Heath Free Public Library. The Town will be asking you to approve the purchase of Helen Mackie's house in the town center for use as a library and town offices.

For over a hundred years, the Heath Free Public Library has had a wonderful home in Sawyer Hall. In addition to maintaining an interesting and varied collection, our library is a popular gathering place for townspeople to exchange information and ideas. Witness any Saturday morning when it is crowded with enthusiastic patrons of all ages looking for books and movies, town news, and computer access. Membership in CWMARS has opened new resources, and high-speed Internet access has been invaluable for those residents who still have only dial-up service available.

Until now, the library has been able to grow and expand to meet the needs of our community and is a cherished town institution. But, the library has outgrown its space in Sawyer Hall and needs a new home.

- ◆ Our librarian has no workspace.
- ◆ Our children and young adults have limited space.



- ◆ There is no quiet study and reading area.

However, the most crucial reason for our space needs is that we are not handicapped accessible. Unless we radically reduce our collection we cannot meet the Americans With Disabilities Act required guidelines in our current space.

(“Big News at the Heath Library” continued on page 19)

Heath Business Directory

The Benson Place
Wild Blueberries & Blueberry Spread
337-5340

Fred Burrington
Artist
339-0030

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

Paul Turnbull
Janice Boudreau
Commercial/Wedding Photographers
337-4033

Bonnie Wodin
Custom Gardens & Landscapes
337-5529

John Mooney
Custom Remodeling
337-8344

Wanda Mooney
Realtor
337-8344

Tripp's Blueberries
Taylor Brook Road
337-4964

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Shelburne Falls

Town Nurse News**Osteoporosis**

By Claire Rabbitt, RN

Osteoporosis is a condition in which the bones have become porous, greatly increasing the risk of fractures, causing pain, immobility, and premature death.

Risk factors for osteoporosis include: aging, being female, small frame or low body weight, European descent, decrease in sex hormones, as in menopause, smoking, alcohol use, and diets with too much salt, soda, and caffeine. People with diabetes may be at higher risk for fractures if blood sugars are not well controlled, as high blood sugar may interfere with bone formation. People with lupus and rheumatoid arthritis are often treated with steroids which slow the activity of bone-building cells.

It is well known that salt is a culprit in hypertension and heart disease, and it is also bad for our bones. "For every 2,300 milligrams of sodium you take in, about 40 milligrams of calcium are lost in urine," according to Doctor Linda K Massey, PHD, RD, Professor of Human Nutrition at Washington State University. One teaspoon of salt= 2,300 milligrams. Recently the FDA recommended we should not have more than a half a teaspoon of salt per day, but on average, Americans consume about 4,000 milligrams per day. Processed foods supply 75% of the sodium we eat, including bread, breakfast cereals, deli meats, frozen meals, canned soup, and canned vegetables. Check labels for sodium content. I recently found that Pepperidge Farm whole wheat bread has half the sodium of other whole grain breads.

To prevent or minimize osteoporosis, good diet and getting enough calcium and vitamin D are important. Weight-bearing exercise helps to maintain bones. After menopause a bone density exam should be done and then every couple of years. We frequently see TV ads for medications that may be prescribed for bone loss. These drugs have significant side effects and you and your health care provider can decide if you should be on one. There have also been warnings about taking too much calcium and vitamin D. The recommended amounts are:

Calcium 1000 mg per day until age 50
1,200 mg per day after age 50

Vitamin D 200 IU per day until age 50
400 IU per day age 51-70
600 IU per day after age 70

An 8oz glass of milk has 300 mg of calcium and 8oz of yogurt about the same. Canned sardines have 320 mg of calcium per 3oz, and canned salmon, 200, as well as being a source of Vitamin D and Omega 3. Swiss cheese has 270 mg of calcium per ounce, and cheddar cheese has 200 mg per ounce. Turnip greens and kale have 200 mg of calcium per cup. If you get enough calcium in your diet you may not need supplements. You should also know that you can only absorb about 600 mg at a time, so it needs to be spread out through the day.

I have recently joined an osteoporosis prevention exercise class at the Shelburne Falls Senior Center. I hope to learn to be a leader and start a class in Heath. Let me know if you are interested. My office hours are Tuesdays, 12:15-1:15 p.m. and Thursdays, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Call me there or at home with your healthcare related questions and concerns. Office number is 337-4847. Home number is 337-8309.

("Big News at the Heath Library" continued from page 16)

For the past fifteen years, the Trustees, together with interested citizens, have tried to find a solution to these critical issues. Last fall it came to our attention that Helen Mackie's house in the center of town was going on the market. Helen's house, the historic Dr. Simeon Strong House, circa 1840, is situated in the center of Heath directly across from the current library. It is an easy walk from other town buildings and is listed in the National Register, as part of the Heath Center Historic District. It has the features we require in a library such as steel beams, a dry basement, and an open floor plan, storage space, and a wonderful natural light. Furthermore, it sits on five beautiful acres that abut our town common and the Old Town House Museum. The flat open lawn affords plenty of space for parking, outdoor library events, gardens, and future town needs. The second floor of the

house has four lovely rooms that will provide much needed office space for the Town.

Both the Selectboard and the Finance Committee have endorsed its purchase, seeing it as a great opportunity for long-range planning of our Town. We plan to finance the project through the USDA Rural Initiative Program, which will provide both a favorable mortgage and possible grant. In addition, we will seek other grant money and launch fund-raising efforts to help with building renovations and library furnishings.

You are invited to join us at the Community Hall for an information meeting Hearing on April 7 at 7:00 p.m. to learn more about this exciting project. If you cannot make this or other meetings (see calendar), please feel free to contact any of the Trustees with your questions.

~ Library Trustees,
Deb Porter, Janis Carr, Kate Bailey

Selectboard's Report

Meeting Schedule

During budget season the Board meets every Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m. in Sawyer Hall, unless posted otherwise. Check our agenda online.

FY12 Annual Town Meeting & Town Elections

This year's Annual Town Meeting will be held on Saturday, May 7, at 9:00 a.m. at the Community Hall. A Special Town Meeting will precede the ATM at 8:30 to transfer funds between various accounts to make up for deficits or projected shortfalls and pay outstanding bills from the past fiscal year. The meeting warrants will be posted on April 29. The annual election will be on Friday, May 6, at the Community Hall. Official notice will be forthcoming.

FY12 Budget Hearings

The Selectboard has been meeting jointly with the Finance Committee to hear requests from Town boards and officers for their FY12 budgets. The Selectboard also has been conducting annual job performance reviews of all employees. A review of all town employee salaries is in progress to determine whether COLA or step adjustments are warranted. The Board reviews job description and also compares Heath salaries with the salary survey published annually by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to help us keep up-to-date with the job market. The Board hopes to wrap up the budget and then begin drafting the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting soon and then meet with the Finance Committee to estimate the impact of the requests on the tax rate and decide on the level of expenditures to propose for the coming year.

New Library Facility

The Library Board of Trustees presented a proposal to the Selectboard and Finance Committee for acquiring a residential structure in Town and renovating it for the new Heath Library. The building will be fully accessible and will provide office space for other town functions on the second floor. There is still much investigation to be done in order to see if the project is something the Town can afford. We hope to have an article for the purchase and renovation of the property on the Annual Town Meeting warrant this May. Funding for the project would come from a long-term, low-interest loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Library Trustees will be holding information meetings in the near future.

Appointments

Seajay Spencer was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Conservation Commission.

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. 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. The new Web page is up and running. Please have a look and let us know what you think.

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

TOWN OFFICES TO BE FILLED IN ANNUAL ELECTION MAY 6, 2011

Incumbent	Position	Term Length
Brian DeVriese	Selectman	3 year
Alice Wozniak	Assessor	3 year
Douglas Mason	Challenger	3 year
Donald Freeman	Finance Com.	3 year
Calvin Carr	Planning Bd.	5 year
Robert Tanner Jr	Dog Officer	1 year
Robert Tanner Jr	Constable	1 year
Jeffrey Simmons	Constable	1 year

No papers have been taken out for Library Trustee or Moderator.



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Annual Town Meetings
On Saturday, May 7,
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At the Heath Community Hall**

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IMPORTANT DATES 2011

April 15, 2011	Last Day to Register to Vote for Annual Election and Annual Town Meeting
April 27, 2011	Last Day to Register to Vote for Special Town Meeting on May 7
April 29, 2011	Posting for ATM-by noon
May 6, 2011	Elections
May 7, 2011	Annual Town Meeting
June 30, 2011	Last Day to Expend Money from FY '11 Funds
July 15, 2011	Last Day to Submit FY '11 Invoices

A New England Tradition The Annual Town Meeting

Sometimes a better perception of an event is appreciated more from a distance. Such is my perception of the Annual Town Meetings in Heath.

Sometimes down and dirty, sometimes lofty and ideal. In any event, my appreciation of the Annual Town Meeting was greatly enhanced after my wife and I moved our farm operation to New York state in rural Herkimer County.

The Town of Warren, just a few miles north of Richfield Springs, was as rural as Heath and with just as good friends and neighbors. What it didn't have (as most all of New York) was a democratic, local town meeting. County government was in place, and we missed the local input in town affairs. The Town had no local school system, no input in highways, or in any local government except the election of a Board of Supervisors for the county.

County Highway Department governed everything except winter-road plowing and maintenance.

The Town of Warren had no local fire department or police department. The school-age children went to a regional district that was similar to the Mohawk Trail Regional School system. County government was in control of most local activities, so no cohesive "rurality" was evident.

I am sure patronage and partiality were present, but unless you were so inclined, most residents were not interested in this form of government administration.

Perhaps I am overstating things, but my idea of local government was very much let down by lack of participation in decision-making in local problems.

We have in New England a unique, if sometimes, cumbersome, local election system that sometimes does not meet our needs, sometimes over-regulates, and sometimes misdirects, but it is local, can be changed by majority vote, is always open to discussion, and is very much locally controlled.

We should cherish what our forefathers created and be ready to defend it.

~ Douglas H. Stetson

Weis Acres



Modern Technology

By Lee-Ellen Weis

Ok. Now I am going to let you know just how dumb I can be. I am NOT one of those people who can do anything with electronics. I can barely figure out the telephone. I only use a computer to read e-mail and write to you all. Jane sometimes has to e-mail me to tell me my "attachment" didn't go through to her!! My cell phone, which you all know doesn't work up here in Heath, has got to be the oldest cell phone in history because I refuse to "upgrade" as there are too many extra buttons and stuff on those newer fangled thingamabobs! Mine is strictly a phone. It can't

take pictures or text things or play music...which is just fine with me. I still become AMAZED when I see things happen with electronics with my four-year-old grandson's toys! How do they do that?!! Even he rolls his eyes at me. Get this! My youngest grandson has a teether that vibrates! I got dibs on that thing when I'm toothless!! I'm lucky my sewing machine has reverse! And that's only because I hired Fred Flintstone to walk backwards! LOL! (My daughter taught me LOL and OMG. Do YOU know what they mean?) I think it's a sign that I'm getting old.

Anyways... I am now getting to the part where I tell just how outdated I am with all the modern technology out there.

Not too long ago, I had to take my mother to a doctor's office situated in a hospital in Bennington, VT. Never been there before, so all was new to me and I hate not knowing where I'm going. I ALWAYS end up at the wrong end of a building from where I need to be as the stupid garmin my husband gave me, (I know he loves me) keeps "recalculating" her position. I named the female voice that gives me directions, Betty. Some day, I'm going to kill her. Did you know that when I first got Betty, I honestly thought she was a real person reading maps off a satellite and coming through to my garmin. Peter still laughs at me for that one. Moving on...of course, the parking is bad too so I knew I would be walking awhile and pushing Mom in her wheelchair on a rainy or windy day! Murphy's Law and all that. We got inside this huge building. Wearing my usual wide-eyed confused expression looking for a sign that would tell me where to go, (Peter tells me where to go all the time), I spotted a woman at a desk! Voila!! Simple, right? WRONG! She told me to go to the north end of the building and by doing that we had to traverse through a long network of hallways that turned into a maze in the middle of the building and then continued through another network of hallways till we reached the very end and came to tall windows that looked out at another building and THAT'S where we needed to be. Where was Betty when I needed her?! And from my previous story, you KNOW I am out of shape! You'd think I'd be skinny with all that I do! Anyways....walking those hallways, pushing Mom in her wheelchair, there were glass doorways intersecting throughout all the way down the building. I thought to myself "can't make this easy for people." "I was going to have to stop at each and every doorway, pull them open, twist and push Mom through without hitting her arms or legs. "Man! This bites!" So off we went when I suddenly realized there was a man walking pretty close behind me. We were in a strange city, remote hallway in a huge building, Peter's voice, his "cop" voice, telling me to hold my purse close, don't look him in the eye, and keep walking! So I picked up speed -he did too - the glass doors got closer when suddenly they opened all by themselves!! I pushed Mom through and kept on going when the next set of doors came up it did it again!! I'm telling you I didn't have to even pause for a second. At least twelve door sets later, I started to spot people moving about up ahead, this guy right on my heels, so I, giddy with delight that this was happening, when Mom stated loudly that she never knew doors would do that all by themselves. I told her that I didn't either when a deep voice from over my shoulder started chuckling and saying that he was glad to be of service by hitting the big metal buttons on our way through! Talk about feeling dumb! I thanked him for his kindness and Mom and I laughed about it each and every time I hit one of those buttons on the wall. I even let Mom hit a couple! Modern technology.. huh! who'd a thunk-it?

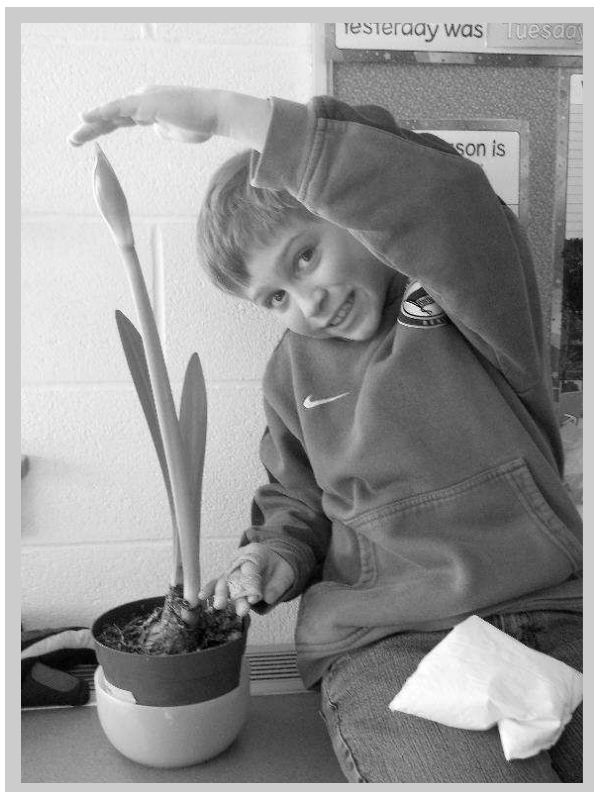
Milestones

Paxton Cho Freeman was born on March 1, 2011, in Stamford, CT, son of Roger and Mi-Sun Freeman of New Canaan, CT, grandson of **Donald C. Freeman of Heath** and the late Caroline S. Freeman of Somerville, MA, the step-grandson of **Margaret H. Freeman of Heath**, and the great-grandson of Phyllis Brown Ohanian of Newton, MA.

Jupiter Bowie Clark Johnson-Fuller was born on February 19, 2011, son of **Lyra Johnson and Edward B. Fuller of Heath**, grandson of Maureen and Edward R. Fuller of Ashfield, **Cynthia M. Johnson of Heath** and the late **Clark A. Johnson**.

Olivia Joan Thompson was born on March 22, 2011, daughter of Matthew and Samantha Clark Thompson of Buckland, granddaughter of **Nathan and Cindy Clark of Heath** and David and Barbara Thompson of Ashfield; great-granddaughter of **William Clark of Heath**, Kenny and Sally Henkler of Whitingham, VT, Joan Lanoue of Ashfield, and William Thompson of Greenfield, and great-great-granddaughter of Dot Clark of Hawley.

Mary Lemelin and Matthew Corrado were married on January 15, 2011, in Worcester. Mary is the daughter of **Paul and Alice Lemelin of Heath**, and Matt, the son of Joseph and Beverly Corrado of Worcester. Both are graduates of Worcester State College. Matt is employed by Home Depot of Worcester, and Mary is a speech language pathologist at Holyoke Medical Center. The couple resides in Worcester.



Journey With Horses



Birch Glen Stables is offering two programs for children ages 9-14 years of age.

Fun With Ponies and Horses is an early release day program that will be held on April 7 and 8; May 4; June 10 and 13, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., and is \$25.00 per session.

While attending this program, children will learn to care for and handle ponies and horses safely. Learn to groom, lead, ride and participate in structured activities and games with the horses.

Horses and the Wild West will be held on Spring Break Week from April 18 through the 22nd, from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. daily. There is a charge of \$250.00 for the week.

This program explores the life and times of the American West. Students will learn about Cowboys and Cowgirls - their skills, thinking and activities. Sessions will include many un-mounted horse experiences.

If you are interested and would like more information on either of these programs you may contact us at birchglenstables@verizon.net or call us at (413) 337-4044.

~ Joan Schoenhals



Prime Reds Amaryllis.

Photographs by Virginia Gary

Spring Bulky Waste Collection

The Franklin County Solid Waste District is holding a "Clean Sweep" bulky waste collection on Saturday, May 14, from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. The drop-off site for Heath residents is the Buckland Recreation Facility on Rt. 112 South..

District residents may bring a wide range of items that are typically difficult to get rid of such as tires, appliances, scrap metal, furniture, mattresses, carpeting, construction debris, computers, televisions, propane gas tanks, and other large items. Materials will be recycled whenever possible.

Residents do not need to pre-register for the collection. However, there are charges for disposal. Disposal fees, cash only, will be collected from residents during check-in at each site. Businesses may participate. A complete list of prices for the most common items will be available at participating town halls, town transfer stations, the District office at 50 Miles Street in Greenfield, and online at:

www.franklincountywastedistrict.org/cleansweep.html

For more information call the District office at:

413-772-2438

or e-mail:

info@franklincountywastedistrict.org

MA Relay for the hearing impaired:

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

The District is an equal opportunity provider.

Heath's Monthly Precipitation (inches)

(Observed by Heath School Staff and Students)

	<u>Rain</u>	<u>Snow</u>
From January 11, 2011	½" ice	41"
February	0	27"
To March 10	3.25"	0"

In this reporting period:

As you can see by the snow column the bulk of this winter was colder and snowier than last year. It seemed like it snowed every couple of days prompting a lot of two-hour delays and "No school" days. The first part of March, however, did show us signs of spring, albeit with a good amount of rain.

~ Timothy Lively

Community Calendar

April 2011

April 04 - PTP Meeting, Heath School, 8:45 a.m.

April 06 - Heath School Field Trip to Colrain for Adam Miller Concert

April 07 - Senior Luncheon, Community Hall-Senior Center, 11:45 a.m.

Heath School Early Release Day, 12:30 p.m.,

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Library Trustees Information Meeting, Community Hall, 7:00 p.m.

April 08 - Preschool Story Hour, Heath Library, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Heath School Early Release Day, 12:30 p.m.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

April 09 - Library Trustees Information Meeting, Heath Library, 9:00 a.m.

April 10 - "What to do before the ambulance arrives," Heath Union

Evangelical Church, 6:00 p.m.

April 11-15 -Heath School 6th Grade Trip to Washington, D.C.

April 12 - Library Trustees Information Meeting, Heath School, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

April 13 - School Committee Meeting, Sanderson

April 16 - Firefighters Pancake Breakfast, Community Hall, 7:30 - 10:30 a.m.

April 18 - 22 - SCHOOLS' SPRING BREAK!

April 20 - Heath Fair Meeting, Heath School, 7:00 p.m.

April 21 - Senior Luncheon, Community Hall, Senior Center, 11:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Library Trustees Information Meeting, (after lunch)

April 22 - Preschool Story Hour, Heath Library, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

April 24 - HAPPY EASTER!

May 2011

May 04 - Schools' Early Release Day, Mohawk, 11:45 a.m.; Heath School, 12:45 p.m.

May 05 - Senior Luncheon, Community Hall-Senior Center, 11:45 a.m. Kids in Concert Performance, Mohawk, 6:30 p.m.

May 06 - Preschool Story Hour, Heath Library, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. Clark Johnson Memorial Astronomy Night, Heath School

TOWN ELECTIONS, SENIOR CENTER, Noon to 7:00 p.m.

May 07 - ANNUAL TOWN MEETING, 9:00 a.m., Community Hall SPECIAL TOWN MEETING, 8:30 a.m., Community Hall Friends of the Heath School Library Breakfast, 8:00 a.m. on

May 11 - School Committee Meeting, Mohawk

May 13 & 14 - *Death of a Salesman*, Mohawk Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

May 15 - Performance at Noon

May 14 – Junior Class Auction, Mohawk, Noon to 4:00 p.m.

Clean Sweep Bulky Waste Day, Buckland Recreation Facility, 9:00 a.m. - Noon.

May 19 - Senior Luncheon, Community Hall-Senior Center, 11:45 a.m.

May 20 - Preschool Story Hour, Heath Library, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

May 23 - Art Show at Heath Elementary, from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

May 27 - Heath School Memorial Day Program

May 28 - Friends of the Heath Library Bake Sale, Sawyer Hall Porch, 9:30 a.m. to Noon

May 30 - Memorial Day , No School



*For, lo, the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone;
the flowers appear on the earth;
the time of the singing
of birds is come, and
the voice of the turtle
is heard in the land.*

*Song of Solomon
2:11-12*

Submitted by Douglas H. Stetson



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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