



HEATH HERALD

HEATH'S FIRST NEWSPAPER 25¢

WINTER ROADS OF YESTERYEAR

by Susan Silvester

In the not so distant past our ancestors traversed the wintry roads of Heath literally risking life and limb as they ventured forth among snowdrifts and mountainous ridges of ice.

In the many hill towns narby, the snowpacked, wind-swept roads were "rolled" during winter months with an enormous wooden roller set into a heavy frame, also of wood. The roller itself measured six to eight feet in diameter and was about 10 feet wide; the teamster, perched high atop the frame, would slowly guide his animals across colorless landscape. This procedure, popular throughout the snowy regions of New England, worked just fine with a little snow. The roller packed and condensed it; however, in major snowstorms it was just about impossible to pack adequately. Drawbacks of the rolling method also included resultant rough surfaces and ultimately icy conditions. This reporter could not find any evidence that rolling of roads was done in Heath, possibly due to the extreme windy conditions that encouraged high snowdrifts to accumulate. Once in the Plainfield area Ralph Dickinson saw an abandoned wooden roller alongside the road, but he has no recollection of such a contraption being used in Heath. Since the roller proved most successful where drifting was not rampant and lesser amount of snow prevailed, it appears that people were correct in using alternative methods for this area.

In lieu of rolling the roads, what did those resourceful Heathens do? Around their homes there was no substitute for the ubiquitous shovel, but on the open roads matters were definitely more complicated. Plowing with a team of horses and a sled was a common sight, and according to Rachel Sumner, a plow was attached to each side of the sled and a road, one team wide, could be fashioned out of a snowy path.

The lay of the land in winter was decidedly different that it was in summer. Lazy dirt roads, circling ponds and woods, were abandoned as windswept channels were carved out of snowdrifts in pastures, through forests and over streams. Dodging the snowdrifts and swerving to avoid fallen, maintaining the most effective straight line available, the early settlers plowed right over fences and through dooryards to reach their destinations. "Over the river and through the wood, to Grandmother's house we go - the horse knows the way to carry the sleigh" conjures up Currier and Ives images of laughter and frivolity as the horse whisked riders and sleigh through the open countryside. We often fail to remember that the era was beset with danger and hard work; determination and sheer survival were key factors in making it through the long winters.

Continued on page 5



Paul Smith Plowing with Oxen and Sled Plow
about 1930

(Photo from Rachel Sumner)

VOTER REGISTRATION HOURS

In order to vote in the March 13 Presidential Primary elections a person not previously registered in a political party in Heath, or one wishing to change party registration, must register with the Town Clerk by Tuesday February 14. Registration sessions will be held on Saturday, Feb. 11 from 12 noon to 8 PM at the home of the Town Clerk on South Road, also on Monday, Feb. 13, 7-9 PM at the Town Hall, and the last day, Tuesday Feb. 14, 2-4 PM and 7-10 PM at the home of the Town Clerk.

A person previously registered as an Independent and who voted on either a Republican or Democratic ballot in the last election, must re-register if the voter wishes to change his/her party affiliation in the March 13 Primary. At the Primary there will be two ballots: a registered Republican must choose a Republican ballot; a registered Democrat must choose a Democratic ballot. However, a registered Independent can choose either a Republican or Democratic ballot. If you are unsure of your party enrollment, contact the Town Clerk before Feb. 14.

In order to vote in the Heath town elections, to be held on May 7, any resident not previously registered must do so with the Town Clerk by Tuesday, April 17.

LETTERS

To the Editors:

The issue or issues raised by Amy Barry in the December 1983 HEATH HERALD prompt me to comment in the broad context of financing for public schools. I am not among those senior citizens who object to my tax dollars being spent for education when I have no personal return. I have always believed that an educated citizenry is the cornerstone of any democracy. My concern today is the extent to which quality education in the public schools may be diminished rather than improved. In the community interest, we must be alert to the risk involved in the growing trend toward private academies with the attendant rapidly increasing lobbying for access to public funds through indirect subsidies such as tuition tax credits, textbooks and supplies, as well as transportation. In short, public educational opportunities of quality for all children should be of paramount importance to all citizens.

PHYLLIS T. KADES
Heath

To the Editors:

. . . You all are a really dedicated staff - and I'm just so glad Heath has the HERALD! Thanks to all you editors - this Christmas issue seems so full - and of Heath life.

BETTY ELDRIDGE
St. Louis, MO

To the Editors:

I want to express a special thank you to those responsible for helping me get out of a ditch in Heath on New Year's Day.

DOTTIE ARNO
Rowe

HEATH HERALD

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LETTERS

To the Editors:

The Heath School Committee would like to respond to Mrs. Barry's December letter published in the HEATH HERALD.

We find in Mrs. Barry's letter three main concerns: The School Committee's possible dereliction of duty in regard to the budget process; the erosion of the educational process at Mohawk; and the issue of alternative schools. While we appreciate Mrs. Barry's concern for education, we find fault both with her logic, which is incomplete, and with her facts, which are unsubstantial.

During the budget process the School Committee, in conjunction with the Finance Committee, has enthusiastically scrutinized and defended the budget at Town Meeting. A check with Chairperson Howland will confirm this. A discussion with Ms. Marcotte will also establish the lengthy and detailed review of each line item in the budget. Your speculation on the efficacy of our discharging duties in this regard calls into question our integrity and the oath we swore as School Committee people.

Mrs. Barry, you are concerned with the educational process at Mohawk and wonder what the Committee knows that you do not. It must have slipped your mind that the School Committee meetings have a specific place on the agenda called the "Audience of Citizens." It is at this time in our meeting that questions and issues just as you have raised are handled. Since you have elected not to use this forum, but instead use a newspaper to voice concern, we will answer in this format. What you do not know but could have known had you asked or read the minutes of our meetings is that the state Accreditation Committee has just granted Mohawk its accreditation in a lengthy report which was quite favorable. The report is available for your perusal. It certainly does not support your presumption of something wrong at Mohawk.

It is the third concern in your letter which exhibits logic that is at best incomplete. Why are you glad that alternative schools exist? Children of school board members have attended other schools in the past (we believe even while you were a board member), so why at this particular time does the situation galvanize causing a state of alarm?

We are sure that you meant no personal attack or criticism of board members and their performance, but even the best of intentions can be misconstrued. Please feel free to join us at a school committee meeting and voice your concerns. Mrs. Barry, as a former committee member, you know how participation from the community on educational issues is gratifying to the board members. We extend an invitation for you to attend our February meeting.

THE HEATH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

HEATH PRECIPITATION

by Ralph Dickinson, Observer
for Mass. Water Resources Commission

December precipitation was 7.37 inches; snowfall was 17 1/2 inches. January precipitation was 2.36 inches; snowfall, 27 1/2 inches.

The total precipitation for the year 1983 was 60.27 inches. This is the wettest year since 1975. In spite of the fact that June through October were very, very dry, the remaining months were very wet.

We have had a total snowfall of 51 inches since mid-November.

LETTERS

To the Editors:

Vote to keep the Public Nurse District

Are you aware that since the resignation of Janet Bliss as district nurse last fall her position was not filled and is now being done by the VNA in Greenfield? Janet is the school nurse and she has agreed to continue in that job until the end of the school year, at which time there will be no school nurse.

The Western Franklin County Public Health District "in the public interest", and without keeping the public informed, decided it would be in the best interest of the tax payer to dissolve the District and save the taxpayers money. Are you aware that Janet's visits were available at no cost to the taxpayer? She performed services too numerous to mention, and because she was a local person she was available day and night. She certainly knew her patients and health problems intimately. She was the true Florence Nightingale who took up where the country doctor left off. She lives in the area, close to all towns and available at moments notice by a toll free call and, with escalating telephone costs, this is a very important factor to consider because every call to the VNA in Greenfield will be a toll call.

The VNA charges \$35 per visit - a substantial fee considering most people do not have insurance, and those with Medicare have to pay a sizable deductible before they begin to cover payments.

The schools will be required to hire their own school nurse which will then increase school budgets.

Because of the escalating cost in the proposed service, I foresee a serious decline in the needed health care of this district if this service is abolished. Due to the high costs in phone calls and visits, people who need these services will not be able to afford them. In summary: instead of saving the taxpayers money, I see it costing more money for less services. Voting for this would deprive the much needed and appreciated health services done by a mobile professional medical person.

It's up to you - vote to keep the Western Franklin Health District. and the District will hire a new nurse.

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LETTERS

To the Editors:

Contrary to Mrs. Sherman's letter (in this number of the HERALD) the issue of health care delivery in the town of Heath is not open and shut. It is involved and complex.

The Board of the Western Franklin Public Health District (WFPHD) did not and cannot dissolve the District. It must be done by each town at an annual town meeting. The Town must vote to withdraw from the District, if it so desires.

The WFPHD legally posts notices of all of its meetings. It is our duty to attend these meetings. This we do. How would Mrs. Sherman suggest "we keep the public informed?" There have been several newspaper articles concerning this whole issue and only one person (who had excellent suggestions and spent many hours researching and meeting with us) bothered to speak to the Board of Health.

I can't imagine who Mrs. Sherman thinks is paying the WFPHD budget, if not the taxpayers.

I was the Board member who initiated a hard look into the distribution of services within the District. The research I did revealed the following:

Town	% Expense	% Services
Charlemont	40 %	60 %
Heath	20 %	12 %
Rowe	20 %	27 %
Hawley	20 %	1 %

Since the District was set up in the early 1950's no one, as far as I can find, had examined the distribution of services. This was not the district nurse's job; it was the job of the health boards in the four towns. With Mrs. Bliss' resignation, such an examination was timely. I have spent untold hours on this issue, doing the above research, attending meetings, trying to get constructive input from the few people who seemed to have an interest, reading material on the merits of town nursing and county nursing care, and discussing the matter with the other two selectmen. The result to date of this research and work is the decision by the Selectmen/Board of Health to have three articles on the warrant at the annual town meeting on May 7; 1) to keep or abolish the WFPHD, 2) to hire a Heath town nurse, or 3) to use the services of the VNA only.

The nursing position was not filled in order to give the four towns time to decide what was the best course of action for each town, and it didn't seem right to hire someone for a job that might not exist on July 1, if the District were dissolved.

Mrs. Bliss expressed interest in continuing her job as school nurse at Hawlemont and Rowe, for which the boards of health were grateful. Whether she continues in that position will be up to her and the two school districts.

Continued on page 4

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LETTERS Continued from page 3

As for being without a school nurse, I understand that the state requires a nurse in all schools and the matter is now being discussed by the Heath and Rowe school boards. Heath selectmen need to work on the details of a Heath town nurse which, if fiscally sound, is the course of action they favor at this time.

Concerning the VNA, it is unfair to the hard-working professionals of that organization to imply that they are less than desirable. Dorothy Garvin, head of the VNA, made a presentation to the selectmen last spring on her organization. She asked if we would support the agency for services that are not reimbursable from any other source, adding that there had not been any in the past. We agreed to do this and, if the town votes to go with the VNA or not, we would continue this practice. In a recent letter from the VNA, she suggested that an amount of \$325 be set aside basing the figure on services rendered in Charlemont. Some of the services offered by the VNA, not by a town nurse, are homemaker/health aids and physical, speech and occupational therapy.

She also came to a legally posted WFPHD meeting this fall, along with Melainie Dhreker, a nurse from Buckland who teaches at Columbia University and Shelia Litchfield RN of Heath, for a three hour discussion on the pros and cons of different forms of health care delivery. Mrs. Garvin has been available to all four towns as a consultant on the matter.

In summary, contrary to Mrs. Sherman's allegations, the matter of health care in Heath has not been resolved behind closed doors. It will not be resolved until the voters do so at the town meeting, and until then we welcome any constructive input from any citizen. Given the fact that there are three very different options on the warrant, it would behoove all of us to become as knowledgeable as possible on the various aspects of this issue.

ANNE STEINBOCK, Chairman
Heath Board of Selectmen

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Charles F. Watters, Jr., CPCU
Theodore G. Penick, CPCU

TOWN OFFICERS TO BE ELECTED

At the annual town election to be held this year on May 7, the following town offices are to be filled.

Position	Term(yrs)	Present Incumbent
Moderator	3	Edward Calver
* Selectman	3	Edward Calver
* Assessor	3	Richard Giard
* School Committee	3	Richard Housner
Finance Committee	3	Linda Marcotte
Planning Board	5	Donald Churchill
Library Trustee	3	John Holdsworth
Town Auditor	1	Newland Smith

* Present incumbent does not intend to seek reelection.

As voted at the town meeting last year a member of the Planning Board is to be elected by ballot for the first time. Previously the Planning Board members were elected from the floor at the annual meeting.

Any town resident wishing to run for one of the above offices must take out nomination papers from the Town Clerk by Saturday, March 24. Twenty or more signatures of registered voters are required on the nomination paper, which must be filed with the Registrar by Monday, March 26.

In addition to the above officers who are elected by ballot, the following positions are to be filled by nominations from the floor at the annual meeting: Fence Viewers (3), Measurers of Wood and Bark (3), and Field Drivers (3).

The last day for new voters to register for the town election is Tuesday, April 17. You can register at the Town Clerk's office in Sawyer Hall any time during her regular office hours or by appointment before that date.

NEW ADMINISTRATOR AT MEDICAL CENTER

by Caroline Smith

Sheila Litchfield has been appointed the new administrator at the Mohawk Valley Medical Center and, with Gail Rice of Hawley, is carrying on the outreach activities of the previous administrator, Ariane Krumholz.

One upcoming program is an informational session for senior citizens at the Senior Center, Odd Fellows Hall in Charlemont, on Wednesday April 25 at 12:45 PM. This program, presented by Mrs. Arista Veber, will deal with health insurance problems, medicare, medicaid, medex, insurance payment for prescriptions, and precautions to take in buying health insurance. The program is free.

The Center is offering a "Help Thyself" program offering ongoing courses such as Stress Relaxation, Nutrition and Weight Loss, Pediatric First Aid, CPR and Smoke Cessation, and basic first aid training for school bus drivers.

Sheila emphasizes that health programs can be arranged for the towns or for groups of people. She would like to hear of your suggestions for future workshops. The new number to call is 625-2503.

A new Memorial Fund has been established for purchasing health education equipment. "Rescue Annies", the manequins used for teaching first aid and CPR, have been purchased with funds given in memory of Nellie Porter and Winthrop Warriner.

(continued from page 1)

Most people owned a team of horses, and naturally each horse would become accustomed to a particular side. Trouble sometimes resulted when a one horse sleigh was hitched to a horse accustomed to team. Rachel Sumner recalls tipping over occasionally when the horse was trotting along and suddenly decided to try the other track. The sleigh, as compared to a sled, was invariably lighter and more susceptible to tipping.

In the 1930's Heath purchased a crawler tractor with a huge snow plow to help with the roads in winter. Ralph Dickinson recalls that sometimes it was necessary to shovel the roads by hand so that the new plow could get through. He says that it took the tractor about three days to travel from one side of the town to the other; if someone needed to get out and were lucky enough, he could follow the tractor. Max Churchill, John's father, ran the huge tractor in those days, along with Ed Burchard. They did their best to accomodate the doctor and anyone with emergencies during the winter months.

Ralph Dickinson remembers that one year up by Bill Wolf's house they were unable to keep the road plowed ... the snow drifted so high that you could step over the telephone wires where 10 to 12 foot drifts had accumulated. There were three or four years of terribly heavy snows with high winds and severe winters.

Even by the 1940's the town still owned just one crawler tractor, and the beaten path continued to meander left and right, across fields and through woods to avoid the enormous snowdrifts. With the ultimate purchase of more sophisticated equipment in town, road conditions indeed became more tolerable. Sliding down the Colrain Stage Road in the late 40's and early 50's on a long open "rip" is a childhood experience I fondly remember; in those days you could hear a vehicle coming for miles away, and the narrow dirt roads packed with snow could beckon to sleds and skis all winter long until the ultimate spring thaw would transform the white runways into muddy ruts, "thank-you-moms" and mucky quagmires as impassable as the wintry roads.

Today front wheel and four wheel drive vehicles abound. The road maintenance is excellent; snow removal within hours of the most devastating blizzard followed by sanding and reploving are simply taken for granted. How fortunate we are!



Plowing with Last Town Crawler
driven by Gerald Galipo on No. 9 Road
about 1958
(Photo from John and Dolly Churchill)

A DREAM COME TRUE

by Marcella R. Lively

I really enjoy being postal clerk for our town of Heath! I have lots of customers who, by the way, are all very nice human beings. I have to say they are avid stamp buyers of the best kind. Their packages are sent on their merry way across the country, and also beyond our boundaries to other countries far away. While waiting on them it isn't unusual for a joke to pass between us.

It's really a good feeling, heading out to work, as I feel I am doing something very useful for my community, something that the people really need and want. Also, it's fun! It's also good for me to have this kind of work to do, to have the opportunity to talk to everyone is a blessing.

When I was a young girl growing up in Manchester NH, we had a postal sub-station in our neighborhood store up the street, run by a woman named Edna. My brother and I often went to mail things for our parents at the store. We always looked forward to our visit with Edna! She always found the time to be interested in what we were doing in school and how we were feeling, etc.

I watched closely while she would perform the ritual mysteries of the postal service, stamping away with various stamps, filling out her assorted slips of paper, weighing different packages, etc. I had a secret wish in my heart that when I grew up I wanted to be just like Edna, doing the same things for work she did. She always seemed so happy!

Unlike the spacious area I have to work in, hers was a tiny space behind a window. But everything had a place for itself with nooks and crannies, drawers, etc. After she would finish her postal business, she would march over to the meat counter and wait on you there! We used to ask where her butcher's cap was and she would say, "It's invisible."

Somehow by my senior year in high school the sub-station faded from my thoughts and I joined the telephone company as a toll operator. In my 6 1/2 years there, I learned every aspect of the traffic department, from operator to information. The work was really enjoyable to me, and again it was because of working with people, helping them get in touch with loved ones far away!

After my marriage to Paul, I became a full time farm wife and home maker and, eventually, a mother. Little did I realize back then that in the year 1981 I would see my dream come true of being able to run a small post office in the town of Heath!

Someone said that good things come to those who wait, and in my case it was true. The people I serve and work with are really great. We are really all brothers and sisters in the eyes of the Creator. Thank you my brothers and sisters for being you!



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HEATH HIGHWAYS and BYWAYS

by Susan Silvester

With the increasing complexity of accepting state and federal monies for the improvement of town roads and associated projects in Heath, it is easy to lose track of what is actually happening amid the myriad files of paper, inevitable letters and resulting verbiage. According to Road Superintendent John Churchill and Selectwoman Anne Steinbock, the priorities for improving the roads in Heath next year are two-fold: The Colrain Stage Road and the Avery Brook Road are the highest on the list.

The Avery Brook Road project will continue to be supported with state money. Therefore the requirements for the size of the road will be determined locally. This particular road will have a width of 20 feet, the Colrain Stage Road, having been started with federal money, and therefore governed by federal regulations, will have a width of 24 feet. This past fall, in order to retain the money allocated for the completion of the road, the town hired the Hillman construction company to prepare and further widen the road for a short ways beyond the four corner intersection of Swamp and Hosmer Roads. In the early spring construction will continue in that direction to the top of the hill by the Kinsman house. The Chapter 90 money being used on the Avery Brook Road construction will be awarded to the town as the actual work takes place, according to Selectwoman Anne Steinbock. A combination of state and federal money will be used on the completion of the Colrain Stage Road, and it will take approximately two years for the completion of both projects.

In addition to the road money Mrs. Steinbock says that the state has announced the availability of money for the structural repair of existing town bridges and she hopes the town will be eligible for some of these funds. She has recently spoken with a state engineer regarding this possibility.

A telephone call on January 20 from Bev Eaton at Senator Oliver's office to Anne Steinbock indicated that the town of Heath will be a recipient of state money for the construction of a shed to house salt used on the roads. As far as she now knows, the funds are been verbally approved and a written confirmation will be forthcoming. The shed is to be a standard state design of green metal with a double wall to retain the weight of the salt. It will be designed to allow a truck to back into it and load the salt onto the bed of the truck without exposing the salt to the elements. Although construction is slated to commence this spring, the exact dollar amount is still unknown. It is also not known at this time whether or not a local contractor will be allowed to do the work. Water in the vicinity of the town garage has already been contaminated with a high salt content, and it is hoped that the construction of a salt shed will alleviate this problem in the future.

In summary, the town of Heath is receiving state and/or federal money for the following projects: (1) Completion of the Avery Brook Road, (2) Further work on the Colrain Stage Road, (both of these will take an estimated two years to complete), and (3) A salt shed to be located near the present town garage. And, finally, Heath officials are hopeful about state money being awarded for the structural repair of existing bridges. We are grateful to the town officers for their diligent pursuit of grant money.

STONEHENGE FOR THE BIRDS ?

(Heath Hens, that is)

Burnt Hill, left behind by farmers,
Grazing ground in Nineteen Forties,
Picnic place of Duns and Drown guests,
From the ridge we watched the sunset,
(Then one cairn, no dolmes added!)
Now reclaimed for berry growing,
Set amidst surrounding mountains:
Greylock, Massamet, Pocumtuck,
Wequamps and the Grand Monadnock.
Names like these suggest the Indians
Who by legend kept this hill burned
For its berries or as look-off.
Must they now admit precedence
To some neolithic people ?
These, 'tis said, built circling cromlechs,
Where the hill lifts up its summit,
Do they point a seasons solistice ?
To some constellation skyward ?
Or a sacrificial altar ?
What's the mystery of these markers ?
Heath stonehenge for heath-en ritual ?
Or the joke of berry pickers ?
While they put aside their raking
Hands deep stained from ripe blueberries,
From the glacier-fractured ledges
Made themselves some private skerries.
Piltdown hoax for antiquaries ?
Vinland Map of eager Yalies ?
On these roosts - reply to queries -
Heath Hens ate fermented berries,
Species now extinct as fairies.

William J. Wolf

(Editors' note: The above was prompted, no doubt, by publicity over the past few years on an array of stones on Burnt Hill in Heath. It is written by one who traversed the Hill extensively some forty years ago when it was owned by the Hamiltons.



'Stonehenge' on Burnt Hill with Jack Cable

(Photo by Chuck Blake)

HEATH WINTER - 1984

by Caroline Smith

Present winters in Heath do not seem nearly as bad as those of 50 years ago or even the one of 1969 when it took days to plow from the Center out to Tripp's.

Now, when there is a forecast of a snow storm, Road Superintendent John Churchill goes to bed early and sets his alarm for 2:30 in the morning. If it is snowing then, he calls his crew Gordon Hathaway, Steve Marcotte and Dohn Sherman to get the plowing equipment ready. They all take the four plows (three large trucks and the pickup) out to clear the town roads, giving first priorities to Avery Brook Road, Burrington Hill, 8A, and the Colrain Road. After these come the high school and other school bus routes, and then all other of the 45-50 miles of town roads that are open in winter, which represent about 95% of the 54 miles of town roads.

While out plowing, John calls home from time to time on his CB radio where Dolly is his right hand man. She gets reports on school closings, messages from other town plows in trouble and can relay these to John. The present CB's in the town trucks are not effective in many parts of town due to variations in the terrain, so it is helpful to have an intermediate relay point to extend the coverage. Harry Briggs at the Fairgrounds is also a very helpful CB relay operator for the road crew as he is at a high vantage point for the town and can contact most of the area.

The pickup truck is used mainly on the narrower roads as it is more maneuverable than the big plows and can move faster, throwing the snow further back. Turn arounds are plowed from place to place on these roads so that when a truck is needed in an emergency it can turn back to help.

When there are high winds (and Heath has many of them) causing drifting snows, John and his crew must go out again after all the roads are plowed once to clear the drifts. In the windiest stretches the plow must back up several times, always throwing the snow to the windward side of the road. Then, after a few hours of sleep, they are back at it again to insure that the commuters and school busses can get back home.

The most dreaded weather is an ice storm, according to John. Even though a road is well sanded a freezing rain can turn it into glare ice very quickly. Then it must be sanded all over again.

John reports that Burrington Hill is the worst road in town, where sanding on one icy day he suddenly "took off at 70 miles per hour downhill!" John thought it was his "last hour." However, skillful maneuvering brought the truck under control.



Max Churchill Plowing with Town Tractor
about 1936
(Photo from John and Dolly Churchill)

So far this year, the town has bought 3000 tons of sand from Warner Bros. and Northfield and more will be needed before the winter is over. How much depends on the weather! Local sand formerly was used on the roads but the quality became so poor that it was more effective to purchase good clear sand.

Only enough salt is mixed with the sand to prevent the sand from freezing, about 17 tons of salt to 750 tons of sand. Hopefully this light mixture will not damage the roadside maple trees. It is not used in large quantities, as on the state highways, to melt the road ice. John says that even if much more were used in Heath it would not help the melting as we do not have the heavy traffic on the roads to churn up the salt. So far the town has bought 750 tons of salt and is presently out of it.

The new salt shed to be built at the town garage will help not only in keeping the salt under cover and ease the loading but also a year's supply can be bought at one time in the fall.

The town equipment is standing up well, according to John. However, a second pickup truck would be a great help. It would cost less to operate than the large trucks and would be much more flexible in plowing the many narrow town roads. John also points out that the grader, which was bought second hand and is over 30 years old, will soon have to be replaced.

Heath still has snow, and we still can have the large snowfall and drifts of 50 years ago - perhaps in 1984! But we can be assured that Heath is better prepared for it than in the 1930's with a competent and dedicated road crew.

THE VILLAGE CHOIR

Half a bar, half a bar,
Half a bar onward!
Into an awful ditch
Choir and precentor hitch
Into a mess of pitch.
They led the "Old Hundred."
Trebles to the right of them.
Tenors to the left of them.
Basses in front of them,
Bellowed and thundered,
Oh, that precentor's look
When the sopranos took
Their own time and hook
From the "Old Hundred."

Screeched all the trebles here,
Boggled the tenors there.
Raising the parson's hair,
While his mind wandered.
Theirs not to reason why
This psalm was pitched too high,
Theirs but to gasp and cry
Out the Old Hundred ...

... from The Living Church September 1888

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PLAYSCHOOL HOLDS COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

by Sheila Litchfield

A music enrichment program, sponsored primarily by the Arts Council Grant, began January 31 at the Playschool. All children 2 years 9 months through age 5 are welcome to attend the program which will introduce the children to various instruments, rhythm awareness and movement to music. The program will continue on four more Tuesdays. Contact Deb Porter for more information.

Another very interesting program was held on January 22 for parents exploring ideas in school readiness. Twenty-two persons gathered from various West County towns to hear Mr. Chip Wood, principal at the Greenfield Center School, speak on this issue. We were encouraged to look at all areas of development: language, adaptive, social and physical abilities (not solely chronological age and intelligence) in placing children in a particular grade level. The value of time spent in childhood cannot be underestimated and yet it is theorized that the pressures we create in over-placement at school and in over-expectations at home could be leading to later problems of adult life stress, high school drop outs and drug abuse. An interesting study was quoted saying that adult success achievement studies show a person's success in life has very little relation to his academic achievement in school. There is quite a lot we can make available to our children without forcing it on them. It seems this is the key factor.

ROWE SCHOOL COSTS

For several years, Rowe has been reported as having the highest average per pupil cost in the state -- always over \$5000. This is an absurdity, for in determining the per pupil cost the state never includes the Heath children attending Rowe Elementary - consistently two-thirds of the enrollment.

When the total cost is divided by a figure including Heath children, the average per pupil cost is \$2759, slightly higher than the state average and lower than the national average, which is \$2951.

Heath expenses are not nearly as high as this. This year for example, its costs are based on forty-one per cent of the per pupil instructional costs only -- teaching staff and materials. The 1983-84 cost is \$1412 per Heath student.

HEATH BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

by Paul Lively, Chairman

With the holiday season behind us, we can now all get down to the business of preparing for the coming celebration.

It was voted at our last meeting to order 300 bicentennial auto plates to publicize the occasion. They should arrive in about a month and will be on sale at the town office and at Peter's Store.

We meet again on February 13 with a lengthy agenda as reports of the various projects are presented. My next report will let you know how things are progressing.

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORT

by Richard Housner, Chairman
Heath School Committee

Anita Page, Rowe School Principal, will be at the Library in Sawyer Hall on Thursday, February 16, at 7 PM for an open house where she will answer questions and discuss matters pertaining to the Rowe School. All parents of students either now attending or expecting to are urged to come as well as all interested citizens.

In order to encourage older community members to visit, Rowe School will hold monthly hospitality luncheons. Several community members will be invited to lunch with selected students from the upper grades as hosts for the luncheon. In that way we hope to foster better understanding of the school. We encourage parents to reserve a place for lunch with their children. Adult lunches are \$1.00 each.

The Rowe School was delighted with the large turnout for the December 19 Christmas program which included presentations of poetry, skits, and choral reading from each class, as well as singing by the newly formed school chorus. Families of fifth and sixth graders contributed refreshments for sale to raise money for the sixth grade trip.

As part of a district grant, the fifth and sixth grades are visiting the Springfield Museum of Science in February to study electricity and adaptation. The Rowe teachers have developed a new science curriculum which will be ready by the end of February. Rowe teachers will attend a Logo computer language workshop during this month scheduled for three sessions. Report cards were issued on February 3.

TOWN COMPUTER STUDY

Last fall the Heath Selectmen appointed a committee to study the feasibility of using a small computer system for the town officials. The applications would be for keeping the assessors' records, preparing tax bills, tax collector's records, treasurer's accounting records, town clerk's records and word processing.

The committee, consisting of Paul Dabrody, Doug Wilkins, Lee Shepard and Newland Smith, has met several times and has been investigating the approaches of other towns of the area in this field, as well as available hardware, software, and costs.

There seems to be no doubt that a computer system after it has been installed, and if used properly by trained personnel, could save considerable time in record keeping and give town officials more up to date information. However, it still remains to be seen if the cost of such a system can be justified for the town.

It is expected that the committee will make a recommendation to the selectmen very shortly.

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LIBRARY LINES

by Jane M. Wishart, Librarian

February is the month when several strange illnesses appear; illnesses like cabin fever and winter doldrums. You may receive treatment at the Library any Monday 7-9 PM, Wednesday 1-5 PM or Saturday 9 AM - 1 PM. Your prescription might include books on travel, or adventure, or romance, or handicraft. Try this medicine . . . for the late winter blues - it might help!

Your Library can offer help in other areas, too. There is a good selection of "how-to" books and this may be a good time to tackle a repair job on the house. You'll find tips on painting, papering, and other handyman chores, and when you're done these best-sellers will be waiting as a reward: Pet Sematary - Stephen King, Poland - James A Michener, Berlin Game - Len Deighton, The Wicked Day - Mary Stewart, Changes - Danielle Steele, Moreta, Dragon Lady of Pern - Anne McCaffrey, Robots of Dawn - Isaac Asimov, The Story of Henry Todd - William F. Buckley, Jr.

The Library Trustees are planning a movie festival in the near future. Your suggestions for types of films or specific titles will be welcomed. If you'd like to see classics or adventure or comedy, let us know so we can plan a program everyone will enjoy.

A reminder to readers: We expect a visit from the book-mobile during the first week of February. Mystery fans should come early to find out who dunit!

Come visit your Library; it's Heath's, it's public and it's free. No other institution in America can make that statement!

CHURCH NEWS

by Amy C. Barry

The mid-week Bible Study Group is meeting on Thursday evenings at 8 PM at the home of Melissa and Dick Quinn on Hazelton Road in Rowe. All who are interested in study and discussion are welcome to attend, regardless of church affiliation.

There will be a confirmation class for junior and senior high school students interested in joining the church or in exploring faith issues. The class will meet for eight weeks beginning February 12 on Sunday afternoons at 3:00 at the Parsonage. For more information, contact Rev. Dooley at 337-5755.

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ACADEMY NEWS

by Luke Housner '89

Midterms have come and gone. It was a new experience for the 7th grade students. After the five days of intense concentration and silence there was a two day semester break. Report cards have also arrived at students' houses, some bringing good news and others not.

The ski season began with a success and a January full of snow. One third of the school commutes to Berkshire East on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Some students are on the ski team while others are recreational skiers.

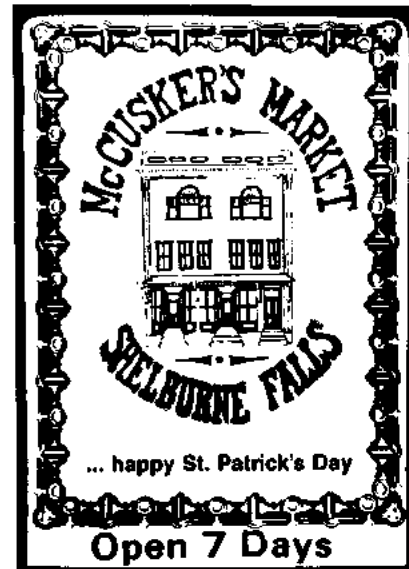
We have enjoyed a variety of winter sports this year such as ice skating and cross country skiing. Academy students have also been teaching Hawlemont children the rules and game of basketball.

The Academy at Charlemont has an exchange program with the Staten Island Academy in New York. Thirteen Staten Island juniors are visiting and being hosted by our senior school the week of February 5-10. The Charlemont senior school will be spending a week in Staten Island.

Shakespeare and company of Lenox are scheduled to spend a week at the Academy this month giving workshops, classes and performances.

The Academy has a newly expanded computer center supervised by Nevin Scrimshaw, Doug Wilkins and George Monk.

There is an active parent's group at the Academy this year which is helping the school to reach its goals of enriching its student body with cultural trips and events. It also encourages visitors and the airing of issues.



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FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

by Chief Earl Gleason

The Department responded to five emergencies in December and one in January. Our busy December started on December 11 with a chimney fire. On December 14 we were called to a structural fire caused by an electrical problem at Kathleen O'Rourke's. Damage was minor. Our next response was on December 19 at the Charles Chandler residence. This house was totally destroyed upon arrival. Two days later we responded to a chimney fire and five firefighters "saw the New Year in" at the Charlemont fire station, covering that station while Charlemont was fighting the fire at the Buddhist temple in Hawley. The new year has been less hectic, with a response to a structural fire on January 8. Fourteen firefighters discovered this fire to be out on arrival.

January has been a busy month administrative wise. The Chief has prepared his budget for the next fiscal year and presented it to the Selectmen. Directors meetings of both the Tri-State Mutual Aid and the Deerfield Valley Mutual Aid were attended. Each Mutual Aid is planning its annual meeting as well as Tri-State's annual Field Day.

The Fire Department has three members on the sick list. John Holdsworth with a knee injury, Pete Smith with a back ailment, and Ernie Thane with health problems have been temporarily removed from the call list. The Department wishes each of these to get back to good health soon.

ASSESSORS' REPORT

by Richards Steinbock, Chairman

We have received permission from the state to send out estimated fiscal 1984, first half, bills. These should be coming out sometime toward the end of February. These will be an amount that is one half of last year's total bill. We are making an effort to correct them with regard to abatements, additions and deletions since fiscal 1983. As we are in the process of finally wrapping up the revaluation, there are bound to be some mistakes that slip through. Unless there is some gross error in your bill, we would appreciate it if you would pay the bill and wait until the revaluation is complete to ask for adjustments.

Once the reval is complete and we have received preliminary certification from the state, all taxpayers will receive an "impact notice" which will show the new valuation and the approximate tax bill. That is the time we would like to see anyone regarding mistakes and the like, so that the assessments and bills can be absolutely correct when the final bills come out in May (we hope!).

Gordon E. Taylor d/b/a



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MOHAWK ESTATES ZONING PROBLEMS

by John Holdsworth

Recent meetings of the Planning Board have dealt almost exclusively with the zoning problem at Mohawk Estates. At present most of the lots are about a quarter of an acre and have frontages of about 70 feet on town roads or Estate roads; although some frontages are considerably less than this, many are greater where two or three adjacent lots are in one ownership. The Board seems to be confronted with two possible approaches: zoning intensity regulations might be slightly modified for Mohawk Estates to provide minimum requirements less than those in effect for the rest of the town but greater than what would be possible for a single lot; or the intensity regulations might be reduced, only for Mohawk Estates, to approximate the single-lot conditions there.

In the first case, a majority of the property owners would have to petition the Zoning Board of Appeals to obtain permission to build on their lots. It is probable that few of these single lot owners would desire to build; for those that did, ZBA approval would be equivalent to a resumption of the policies that pertained prior to the date when the building inspector refused to issue more permits for the Estates. ZBA denials would probably lead to some cases of litigation and test of the bylaws.

In the second case, the onus of repeated decisions would be removed from the ZBA. Construction could proceed again subject to restrictions normally applied by the building inspector and by health officials charged with authorizing septic systems.

In both cases, the town would have to agree to accept the Estates' roads solely for frontage purposes, but only those roads now maintained by the town would, in the future, be so maintained; responsibility for all other roads in the Estates would lie with the Estates land-holders. It is also likely that in parts of Mohawk Estates construction would someday be limited by sewage/pollution problems.

The Planning Board is tentatively scheduling a public hearing on this matter for Monday, March 12, at 8 PM at the Community Hall. There will be considerable publicity for this hearing and any change in date or time will be well publicized.

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SELECTMEN'S REPORT

As is usually the case, there was very little more than routine business and none of importance before, during, and immediately following the holidays. A beginning has been made on the preparation of a budget for the 1985 fiscal year, and we will soon be deeply into it.

During this period, which has given us a chance to take stock, we have concluded it is time to establish a Conservation Commission. Membership will be appointed by the selectmen and we have thought ideally it should be people who have taken a lively interest in the protection of the environment. We are taking this means of asking that such people let us know of their concern and of their availability.

We are also working on some alternative plans for the provision of home nursing care. These will be submitted to the town for a vote at the annual meeting.

We have also been brought up to date on the plan backed by the county for a solution to the problem of the dump through the operation of a solid-waste incinerator. It looks promising. More on this at a later time.

The state has granted us money to pay for a salt shed across from the garage.

At the meeting of January 30 the secretary read the following statement: "It is time for me to become a town grandfather. I have a continuing commitment to keep the tax map up to date and I have agreed to put on a bicentennial play. I expect to be a candidate for the office of town moderator this spring, but I am not going to run for a second three-year term as selectman. A Latin inscription on one of my ceiling beams may be translated: 'Be careful not to stretch the rope too far; it might break.' I find myself less resilient physically and emotionally than I once was. Besides, the office needs someone in tune with modern times. I am grateful for the confidence which put me into office and sensible of the honor. It has been a good experience and, I hope, a productive effort."

TOWN OFFICE HOURS

(At Town Hall unless otherwise noted)

Selectmen: Mondays 7 PM

Assessors: Mondays 7 PM

Town Clerk and Treasurer:

Mondays 8 AM - Noon & 7-10 PM

Wednesdays & Thursdays 8 AM - Noon

Finance Committee: As posted

Planning Board: 2nd Monday of month 8 PM

Heath School Committee: 2nd Tuesday of month 7:30 PM

Tax Collector: (at Sandra Gilbert's residence on Avery Brook Road)

Mondays and Tuesdays 9 AM - 12 Noon
also by appointment 337-4390

Library Trustees: 1st Monday of month 7 PM

Library: Mondays 7 - 9 PM Wednesdays 1 - 5 PM
Saturdays 9 AM - 1 PM

Post Office: Monday through Saturday
9:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Dump: Mondays 10 AM - 2 PM Wednesdays 10 AM - 4 PM
Saturdays 9 AM - 5 PM

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FINANCE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

by D. F. Howland, Chairman

The Finance Committee's immediate task is to review the budget items proposed for the annual town meeting on May 7. Because of increased state aid this year, there has been some easing on the costs of maintaining services. For example, Mohawk Regional School is proposing a 6% increase in their budget, but because state aid has reduced this year's costs the increase brings the total back to where we started last July. Nevertheless we still do not have the resources to broaden services because of the limitations of our tax base.

The town has had to borrow considerably because of cash flow problems attributable to not getting the tax bills out. Fortunately, however, interest rates for municipalities are relatively reasonable as compared with those of recent years.

Proposition 2 1/2 still lives according to the Governor. State and local taxes in Massachusetts are \$14.50 per \$100 of income as compared with the national average of \$15.50; other New England states raised taxes by 50 cents/\$100 while Massachusetts raised theirs 22 cents/\$100; our real estate tax ranking has dropped from 1st to 11th in the nation; local aid has risen from 45% of revenues raised locally to 65% of revenues; Massachusetts is now providing 9% more local aid than the national average.

These trends help all of us as taxpayers and we should be able to start gaining some benefits for the town. The Finance Committee is doing long range planning to take advantage of these trends.

Although there are several variations available now that permit towns and cities a little more flexibility, Heath's relatively small half million dollar budget should not require any special attention in this regard. Governor Dukakis is proposing more state aid this next year, all of which seems to substantiate the shift in the legislature's thinking about 2 1/2 and the need of the communities.

ANNUAL TOWN REPORT DEADLINES

The Town Clerk has already begun planning for the publication of the next annual town report. She has announced that all copy for the departmental reports to be included in this year's edition must be in to her office by February 29.

The Selectmen have set April 16 as the closing date for the warrant for the annual town meeting to be held on May 7.

NEW SETTLER ON ROWE ROAD

by Kathy Wheelock

Another new couple has settled in Heath on Rowe Road. Ann and Bill Shaw moved here from Greenfield. Like a lot of new residents, their arrival in Heath was not planned. The Shaws had been looking for property for their trailer and found the desired lot in Heath.

Bill Shaw works as a superintendent at Bendix and his wife, Ann, now retired, was a former employee at a nursing home. The Shaws have seven children and a number of grandchildren. The children in the family are all grown up and are making a life for themselves, but they will all be visiting in Heath from time to time.

The Shaws will be spending their spare time making comfortable their new home in Heath. A rather late but hearty welcome to Ann and Bill Shaw plus their house mate poodle.

MILESTONES

by Edith C. Royer

Olin Duncan was born on November 5. He joined his new parents, Carol Sartz and Arthur Schwenger on December 30.

Moria Lin was born on November 30 to Arlene and Ewan Mikolajczuk of Whately. Moria is the granddaughter of Pearl Churchill of Shelburne and great-granddaughter of Grace Landstrom.

Kimberly Ann was born December 7 to Kevin and Jo Ann Pettingill of Sumter SC. Kimberly Ann is the granddaughter of Ray and Terry Pettingill.

A daughter Rachel was born on December 30 to Bob and Joanna Delisle of Brunelle Hill Road.

Gavin Francis was born on January 24 to Harry and Nancy Briggs of Colrain Road.

Steven Foster was born on February 2 to Michael and Veronica Smead. Steven is the grandson of Fred Lively.

Alan Pike of Westfield died December 15 as the result of an automobile accident. He left his father-in-law, Clarence Cutter, a brother-in-law Daryl Cutter, two nieces and a nephew of Heath.

Clovis Lively died January 18 in the Hillside Nursing Home. He lived most of his life on a farm on No. 9 Road in Heath. He leaves his wife Celina of Charlemont, a son Edwin of Vernon CT, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren; also five sisters, Clara Cardinal of North Adams, Amy Poulin and Hazel Leonard of California, Phillipine Peters of Heath, and Nora Galipo of Shelburne Falls; also several nieces and nephews of Heath.

OMISSION

Due to a computer error, several sentences were inadvertently omitted in the Letter to the Editors from Paul Lively printed in the December 1983 issue of the HEATH HERALD. The editors apologize to Paul Lively for this omission.

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HEATH PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

William E. Crowningshield has been named to the Dean's list for the first quarter at Cape Fear Technical Institute, Wilmington NC.

Martin Peters, Tami Nelson, and Eric Sumner have been named to the Dean's list at Greenfield Community College.

Bob Dane recently exhibited some of his glass sculpture at the Heller Gallery in New York City. "Glass America 1984" offered a multitude of new and still evolving approaches to glass in the more than 250 new pieces offered by over 150 glass artists.

The 7th Annual All School Musical, "My Fair Lady", will be held on March 9, 10, & 11 in the Mohawk School Auditorium. Four Heath students will appear in the show - Lisa Hamilton, Mary Howes, Bonnie Cobb and Martha Lively.

Grace Landstrom is at the Franklin Medical Center where she is improving steadily.

Lorin Gowdy recently broke his heel in a fall from a ladder in his barn and is now recovering at home.

The Cromacks and the Deardens are leaving for warmer climates. The Cromacks will return after a vacation in Florida, but the Deardens have sold their house and will be moving permanently to New Mexico in June.

Peggy and David Howland have returned from a tour of Russia sponsored by Bunker Hill Community College in Charlestown, MA. They visited Moscow, Suzdal, Tbilisi, Gori, Kiev, Riga and Leningrad.

Elizabeth Canali, Director of the Northfield Mt. Hermon Ross Fishburn Gallery, recently organized a show at their library entitled "A Delicious Art Experience." The show included meeting the artists, viewing and eating the exhibits. Elizabeth exhibited a "scarf" woven with an overshot technique made of black and red licorice strands. She is a faculty member at the school and is a weaver and jewelry designer.

Tish Gudell is recovering at home after recent surgery.

Dianne Stowe has been named to the Dean's list at Bay Path Junior College where she is enrolled in the executive secretary program. Dianne was also inducted into the Omicron Alpha Nu Chapter of Phi Beta Lambda which is the college division of Future Business Leaders of America.

Marge Dearden has returned from six weeks in Mexico where, through the Experiment in International Living, she studied at the Cuernavaca Center for Bilingual and Multicultural Studies. She stayed four weeks there living with a Mexican family. The last two weeks were spent in Morelia in the state of Michoacan, over six hours by bus from Cuernavaca. There she lived with a family in a compound surrounded by other members of the family. This gave Marge an opportunity to speak Spanish at which she is now quite proficient.

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