



VOLUME 9 NUMBER 5 DECEMBER/JANUARY 1987/1988

HEATH HERALD

HEATH'S FIRST NEWSPAPER 35¢



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

MILESTONES

by Edith Royer

Maria Ann was born on October to Monika and Matthew Lively. Maria Ann is the granddaughter of Paul and Marcella Lively.

Tyler Scott was born on October 17 to Joni and Craig Sessions of Buckland. Tyler is the grandson of Norman Sessions and Joan Sumner and the great grandson of Dorothy Sessions.

Lena Rae was born on October 23 to Alma and Robert Jillson who live on Number Nine Road.

Eric Bryant was born on November 17 to Cindy and Robert Coates of Charlemont. Eric is the grandson of Robert Coates of Heath.

Brandon Michael was born open November 19 to Debbie and Douglas Seibert of Greenfield. Brandon is the great grandson of Wilbert Rainville, Sr. of Heath.

Frederick Norman was born on November 29 to Lisa and Norman Davenport of Shelburne. Frederick is the grandson of Catherine and Bruce Cromack and the great grandson of Hannah Burrington of Heath.

Calisandra Davis was born on November 30 to Kimberly and David Griswold of South Road.

Lucille Annear died on October 19. She was born in Heath, the daughter of Philippine and Leon Peters. She leaves her husband, Cyrus C. Annear, Jr., and many relatives including Cleon Peters. Mrs Annear was a postal clerk for ten years in Charlemont.

LETTER

To the Editors:

I wish to correct a statement made by me in the last HERALD. I said the Greenfield Firefighters union refused to work with the county computer. William Devino of that union called me to tell me that my information was not correct. I wish to apologize for any problems my mistake may have caused.

Earl M. Gleason



HEATH HERALD

HEATH'S FIRST NEWSPAPER

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Editorial Staff Pegge Howland
Caroline Smith

Editorial Assistant Alastair Maitland
Staff Reporters Beverly denOuden
Edith Royer
Susan Silvester
Alli Thane

Advertising Ray Pettengill
Circulation & Business Terry Pettengill
Typography Newland Smith

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HEATH PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Charles Kades participated in a conference entitled "Comparative Constitutions" at the University of Hartford on November 18 and 19. The conference offered an opportunity for internationally known specialists in constitutional law and history to look thoughtfully at others' political and legal systems. Among the constitutions of some 18 countries, Chuck Kades spoke about the Japanese constitution.

Airman Michael D. Smith, the son of Peter Smith, has graduated from basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Peter is a 1987 graduate of Mohawk Trail Regional High School.

SHERMAN'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Elmer L. and Mary L. Sherman celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary recently with a family dinner at Brickers Restaurant.

They were married October 31, 1937, in Providence, RI and first lived in Charlemont where Elmer was employed by the highway department. They moved to Heath in 1951 where Elmer was self-employed as a logger and maple syrup producer. Mary became manager of the Heath Branch School cafeteria and later served as Town Clerk, Town Treasurer and as Selectmen's Clerk. Mary is a member of the Heath Ladies Aid.

They have three children, Leland of Heath, Martha McDonough of Des Moines, Iowa and Patricia Guilbault of Turners Falls. There are six grandsons, one granddaughter and two great grandchildren.

HEATH PRECIPITATION

by Ralph Dickinson, Observer
for Massachusetts Water Resources Commission

October precipitation was 5.97 inches; snowfall was 3 inches.

November precipitation was 3.44 inches; snowfall was 15 1/4 inches.

Total precipitation for the first 11 months of 1987 is 49.11 inches. The average annual precipitation for the past 20 years is 51.37 inches.

The season's first snowfall on October 4 was 3 inches. Previously we have not had a measurable snowfall in October since 1979 when we had 2 inches on October 12 of that year.

State and Federal Returns
Individual and
Small Business
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by Alli Thane, Librarian

HEATH AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWS

By Michael Peters

At the November meeting of the Society all of last year's officers were re-elected. These are: John Henry, president; Michael Peters, vice-president; Barbara Smith, secretary; and Karen MacDougall, treasurer.

Highlights of the past Fair were discussed and among those were how we got a well deserved, perfect three-day weekend without one drop of rain. With good weather and great attendance coming hand-in-hand, we had the perfect setting for a record year. The 40 by 100 foot tent was not needed for rain cover but it proved to be just as handy for sun cover. It will definitely be part of next year's Fair. With the chicken barbecue on both days (by the Fire Department), along with the woodsman's contest, the sheep judging, the horse pulling, the well liked Wright Brothers' mime and the garden tractor pull all going on at the same time, the crowd was traveling a lot from end to end. This made the people as well as the concessionaires and committee very happy.

As far as the financial situation, the Fair paid all of the normal expenses along with new additions for this year, such as \$1500 for the 4-wheel drive track improvements, \$1000 tent rental, \$900 for the woodsman's contest, and a hefty \$2500 payment or 50% of the loan on the trailer. With the decision on the purchase of a riding lawn mower still floating, we were able to arrive at the same balance in the checking account as after last year's Fair. This is a good sign and proves a profitable year.

One project in the works for next June is the rebuilding of the old exhibit hall connected to the secretary's booth. With due respect to all the Heathens who helped build the old hall in the early sixties - well, the place is getting old too and is in need of major repair. Hopefully, by the time this article is out, about 9 or 10 thousand board feet of logs will have been marked for cutting. These were donated by ten or so landowners for this project. Plans are for replacement of the roof and a few rafters along with all of the siding, new flooring and doors for the hamburger booth side, and building tables on the proposed new cement floor in the main room. Another thought is to build more shelves all around the inside for art and craft exhibits. With added lighting it has the potential for anything. Lumber will be sawed and stacked to dry, so that next June or July we can have community work bees to do the construction. Hopefully some of our many carpenters in town will volunteer their skills for this project.

Due to generous support, this idea has completed the first step of being a reality. About 17,000 feet of logs have been donated by very generous townspeople. Almost all of this has been marked for cutting by Bill and Nathan Clark. By trading logs in

exchange for having our logs sawed into lumber and delivered, the Fair will have about 11,000 feet of lumber which exceeds our expectations. Some plans for using the extra lumber after completion of the old exhibit hall are: building a roof over the stage, building more picnic tables, building seating in the already planned and half state-funded project for a sheep and cattle judging building. With landowners donating between 500 and 5000 feet of lumber at a time, our quota was filled in a hurry. Keep in mind that 11,000 feet of lumber is worth about \$3300 and therefore is a most generous contribution. Donations have been made by Carroll Stowe, the Dickinsons, Pat Smith, Clyde Churchill, Ernie Thane, Walt Gleason, Art Schwenger, Paul Burrington, Charles Mackie and Don Conlan. Again thanks to all of you for your tremendous support.

Generally speaking, the 1987 Fair went smoothly, but in order to give all of the views, here are a couple of minor problems being worked on. Most important is the new arrangement for selling ice cream cones. The high cost is the main problem and, to our regret, this caused many unhappy faces. The remedy to this will probably be to put the ice cream back into the hamburger booth. The only other problem was the late arrival of the woodsman's contest crew which was due to one of the men getting stung by a bee. But they made it about two hours late and did put on a great show. We are constantly trying to better the Fair and already have a few surprises in the works for next year.

Half of the population of Heath works together at the Fair, doing such things as directing cars, guarding the main gate, moving chairs, slaving over a grill cooking some 3,635 hamburgs and hot dogs, mowing the grass, picking up trash, or working for Pat and Mary raking. This is what makes it a success and is the secret ingredient in making the Heath Fair a truly unmatched, old time, friendly country fair.

Reminder: The Fair Association desperately needs new members to help in the planning of this community event. Call any of the officers or members for more information.

COMMUNITY HALL FAIR

by Karen Brooks

The Community Hall Committee is sponsoring a Winter Fair on Saturday, December 12, from 10 AM to 4 PM at the Hall. The Ladies Aid will be selling their articles as well as many local crafts people. There will be a children's area with games and face-painting, and Santa has promised to spend the day to have his picture taken with the kids.

The Committee is looking for donations for a sealed-bid (silent) auction, and the piano that was taken from the downstairs will be auctioned that day. If you can't make it, just phone in your bid to Karen Brooks 337-6614 or Dolly Churchill 337-6680, or call the Hall by 2 PM on that day.

There will be a light lunch served from 11 to 2 downstairs as well as a bake sale, coffee, etc. all day. If you can bring something to the bake sale, or have something for the auction, or would like to help in any way, please let the Committee know. This is a benefit for our Hall and we need your support. The proceeds of the Fair will be used to repaint the front outside of the building.



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NEW NEIGHBORS & NEW BUSINESS

by Pat Leuchtman

Anne Plunkett and Christine Herdell have been busy ever since they moved to Tink Warriner's house on Jacksonville Stage Road in January 1986. Anne grew up in Connecticut and Chris in Detroit. This May, Anne bought the Bridge Street Bookshop in Shelburne Falls and Chris became a nursing student at Greenfield Community College where she is developing a special interest in pediatrics and hospice work.

They both worked in Washington, DC, Anne as an environmental lobbyist and Chris for the National Center for Voluntary Action. It was while Anne was on buying trips for a second hand book business that she returned to New England and they decided to settle here.

From April through December, Anne is especially busy with the bookstore because it's open seven days a week, from 10 - 6 every day but Sunday when they're open from noon to 5. Chris helps out at the store when she can, usually on Sundays which turns out to be a good business day. From January through March the store is open Wednesday through Sunday, which gives Anne and Chris a little more time to enjoy the Heath winter they love.

The bookshop has changed a little since Anne took it over. They still have some used books, although Anne says she finds it difficult to get out on buying trips now. She's especially interested in unusual and out of print books in all fields. She finds new books that she's able to provide at sale prices that are very popular, but she can order any new book for a customer and doesn't charge for out of print book searches. She also provides a special mail order service for those who are home bound or over 65. Customers just need to phone their order and Anne will get the book and mail it out. In addition she sells books at a discount to libraries because she has an appreciation for library budgets.

Anne's personal book collection includes works by women, books on animal rights and sets of leather bound books.

In addition to selling books, the Bridge Street Bookshop offers a selection of cards, some of which are produced by local artists like Paula Gottlieb of Ashfield, gift wraps and magazines.

Whatever it is you are looking for, Anne will give you knowledgeable and friendly help.



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THE OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS TREE

[This is a talk by the late Mrs. John Falstrom to the Christian Women's Clubs of Northern New Jersey, of which she was president. She was a sister of Ruth Churchill and spent part of many summers in Heath. The talk was presented in December 1974.]

One Christmas season about 25 years ago a minor uproar occurred in Wall Street. Economizing governors of the Big Board had chosen a skimpy, undersized tree to decorate Broad Street. Not until a towering 50-foot fir has been hastily installed in its place did the thunderous complaints subside. The following Christmas another tree was set up. Its \$800 price and its 46-foot height seemed to satisfy everyone!

Just how the Christmas tree custom began has never been verified. A series of legends have been passed on to succeeding generations. According to one story, Martin Luther of Germany was the originator of the Christmas tree. While taking a midnight stroll he is supposed to have looked up at the stars and thought about the approaching Christmas. He suddenly decided how he could make Christmas mean more to his little boy. That was to bring in an evergreen with its twigs resembling Christmas crosses and deck it with candles to represent the stars of the heaven. Since there is no documented record of this story, it has been relegated to the realm of tradition but it could have happened.

Historically it will be recalled that the pagan Europeans decorated and worshiped trees constantly and it is possible that the Christmas tree is a survival of their ceremonies. The first definite reference to a Christmas tree is in literature, however, appearing in an anonymous manuscript dated 1605 which describes an ornamented German tree. Even today the tree is the high point of the German Christmas.

How did the Christmas tree find its place in America? Not through the Pilgrims. They were forbidden by law to even celebrate Christmas. It is said that the Hessian soldiers fighting for England during the American Revolution introduced the tree to the colonists. In their camps they celebrated Christmas with lighted trees. The colonists liked the idea and cut evergreen trees for their own use in the years that followed. Popular ornaments on their trees were the quilled ornaments. Quilling is an ancient art and gets its name from the fact that long strips of paper or parchment were wound around the bony end of a feather or quill.

Every Christmas of yesteryear had strings of popcorn and paper rings. I remember making them in school, don't you? Along with paper lanterns and cornucopias filled with candy. Godey's Ladies Book of 1860 mentions the lovely lace bags. And, of course, there were gingerbread men - fragrant cookies decorated with sugar.

Candles were used to light the Christmas trees years ago but there was always the danger of fire. In 1895 Ralph E. Morris obtained some 12 volt flashlight bulbs made for a telephone switchboard and fashioned them into strings of lights for his family tree.

And now, in closing I wish you an old fashioned Christmas greeting: "Merry Christmas to all!"

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THE COMMUNITY'S HALL

by Beverly denOuden

The present day Community Hall in Heath Center had its beginnings in 1872 as one of the three churches in the Center. It served the Methodist parishioners until 1892 when the three denominations in town joined to organize the present Heath Union Church in its building built in 1833. Nobly as the building may have served in its early years, this account has more to do with its transformation into its present state, most of which transpired from the late 1920's to the mid 1950's. The author is indebted to Esther Dickinson and Rachel Sumner for the account that follows.

In the 1920's the building changed to secular uses. It was held in private hands at that time by Mr. Robert Miller. Edward Dickinson, Esther's uncle, operated a general store in the lower level of the building. Mr. Dickinson also served as postmaster in Heath. Rachel Sumner visited that store as a young girl and recalls that buggy whips were strung from their tips just to the right of the store entrance. She also recalls Edward Dickinson relocating his store goods across the way to the present Gruen home with the aid of a wheelbarrow.

In 1923 a group of summer people, organized under the auspices of the Historical Society and led by Dr. Laurence Chapin, acquired the old church and this was the beginning of its community use. Dr. Chapin, an MD in Springfield, summered with his family in the present Mackie house. The interior of the old church was modified, the pulpit removed and the stage built. The pews were sold to interested people to help finance the renovations. The pulpit and some of the pews are still in the collection of the Heath Historical Society.

The annual grammar school graduations were held in the "new" community hall. Esther Dickinson recalls her graduation in 1932. All the schools in town would come together and the hall would be packed. She further reminisced that she had a new teacher every year, the teachers coming from two years of normal school and then moving on after being polished a bit by the Heath children.

During the 1930's and 40's the Historical Society supported the building by sponsoring plays and entertainments - several each summer. The local townspeople and the summer residents joined together to tread the boards. The presentations, mostly comedy, were enthusiastically received by the community. At Fair time there was always a play in the evening with standing room only. After the play there would be two dances with live music - square dancing at the Community Hall and round dancing at Sawyer Hall. Reinhold Niebuhr performed one summer in an exciting vaudeville performance. Bill Wolf participated as narrator in one of the last community productions, Wilder's "Our Town" presented in 1951.

During this time the basement of the Hall was unfinished. The community and church dinners were all held at Sawyer Hall with preparations taking place in a tiny kitchen equipped with a wood stove and no running water.

In 1955 the Historical Society transferred the ownership and maintenance of the building to the town. The town voted in February 1956 to use \$6000 for cleaning and restoration of the basement. At the same time a committee of six community women was appointed to manage Hall affairs; Hannah Burrington, Lucia Finck, Nora Galipo, Edith Royer, Rachel Sumner and Ruth Terrill. This group along with their husbands, families and, no doubt, many other community members set about the huge task of transforming the rude lower level to its present functional state.

The next year the town appropriated an additional \$4000 to finish work on the walls, foundations, toilets and stairway. Harry Terrill and Herman Harris also donated their labor to accomplish much of the renovation.

From their inception it was the dream of the newly formed Community Hall Committee to equip the place for dining and to move out of the somewhat primitive Sawyer Hall kitchen. To that end the years of 1956 and 1957 witnessed a flurry of culinary activity. A total of twelve benefit dinners took place at the instigation of the determined committee, again with community members baking pies, rolls and beans to support the effort. During this time Heath developed a sound reputation for family style dining and people would be lined up as much as an hour before the scheduled serving time.

The net profit from the twelve dinners was \$1254. This amount furnished service for 100 people, chairs, tables, the gas range and pots and pans. Rachel said they had fun and knew it would benefit the town. These same women continued as the Community Hall Committee for eighteen years.

The Hall has indeed fulfilled its promise to serve the community, witnessing its weddings, parties and pleasures as well as town meetings. Further it stands as a tribute to service; service to place - a place called home.



HEATH COMMUNITY HALL c. 1926

(Staff photo)

Gordon E. Taylor d/b/a



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FOOTWEAR

MOHAWK TRAIL REGIONAL SCHOOL NEWS

by Tanja Davin

The first quarter of the 1987-88 school year at Mohawk has been completed. Students should soon be receiving report cards.

The Middle School Musical, The Wizard of Oz, was a success, and work on Little Shop of Horrors, this year's all-school musical, will be starting soon.

The Music Association at Mohawk recently held a "Musiction" and is now selling raffle tickets for such prizes as a compact disk player to raise money for a trip to Florida, scheduled in the spring.

The Warriors football team finished second in its league for its first winning season since 1981. Congratulations, team!

Winter athletics including boys' and girls' basketball, winter track and downhill skiing will begin practice in the next few weeks.

At the joint school committee meeting, with representatives from all schools in the nine-town areas, it was decided to begin an AIDS education program. On December 4 staff members from Mohawk, Sanderson Academy, Hawlemont, Rowe and the B-C-S School District met in the Mohawk auditorium to hear a presentation by Robert Abel of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health on facts and fears about AIDS. Students and parents will also be given this opportunity on December 10. In addition to this a pamphlet written by the U.S. Public Health Service Center for Disease Control was sent by mail along with report cards to students' homes.

Once again this year at Mohawk promises to be productive and filled with new and exciting happenings. Students, faculty and administration are working together to make this year the best yet at the High school.

I would like to end by wishing everyone a safe and Happy Holiday Season.

MOHAWK MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

by Valerie Belval, Grade 7

Well, the seventh graders, most of us, think school is going great.

We have gone on two field trips. First we went to the Big E, which is a great place to have fun. We went into all the state buildings, went on rides and saw many other things. When we got back from our trip we picked a state to do a report on. Two or three students would select a product from that state. Next we made a brochure or poster of the product we picked, wrote a script and did a commercial about our product. It was lots of fun. We were then graded on them. Our parents watched our commercials on video tape at open house.

Our second trip was to Catamount Mountain. That, too, was very interesting. We were able to see wild animals, collect soil samples and all kinds of different leaves. We ate our lunch at the top of the mountain. Some kids were going to fish, but they had one problem. They forgot their fishing poles. When we returned from our exciting trip we wrote another report. This time the report included three different leaves, a map of where we went, a folder and a written report. That was extra fun to do.

All the students at Mohawk's Middle School seem to be doing very well, and all I can say is keep up the good work.

THE WIZARD OF OZ

by Susan Silvester

On November 6, 7, and 8 the seventh Middle School Musical was presented at the Mohawk Trail Regional School. Over one hundred students in grades 5 - 8 from all six schools in the district participated in an outstanding production of the "The Wizard of Oz."

Producer Joan Smith, a special education teacher at Mohawk, and director Nick Waynelovich of the Music Department, combined their talents and many years of experience to make this a presentation which will be remembered for many years to come. Special effects included flying witches, a fog machine, a whirling tornado from Kansas and a series of shrinking witches portrayed by Mr. Waynelovich's children. The stage came alive with real barnyard animals in the opening farm scene, as Aunt Em and Uncle Henry, played by middle school teachers, talked with Dorothy. A well behaved canine star named Sam filled in as Toto during the beginning and closing scenes of an exciting performance.

Heath students in the production were Valerie Belval and Caroline Barry from the seventh grade, Justinia Tanner, Betsey Silvester, Jennifer Gilbert and Shawna Hyytinen from the sixth grade and Emily Nichols from the fifth grade.



Heath Children in Wizard of Oz

Back: Jennifer Gilbert, Betsey Silvester,
Emily Nichols

Front: Shawna Hyytinen, Caroline Barry,
Valerie Belval, Justinia Tanner

(Photo by Sue Silvester)

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NEWS FROM THE ACADEMY

by Olga Peters '94

The school year has started off fast with Shakespeare and Company coming, field trips, soccer season and Mountain Day. Whew!

Shakespeare and Company came the week of October 19 for a four day workshop. We had so much fun. The last day of the workshops, the players of Shakespeare and Company put on a presentation for us and the students of Hawlemont. Next, to top it off, the students of the Academy put on skits for each other. We got quite a few laughs from those numbers.

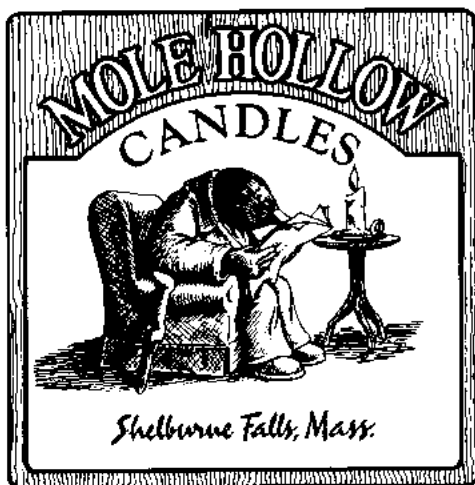
The next week was just as busy, this time with field trips. The senior school had overnight field trips. The seniors train-tripped to New York to see various museums and plays. The 11th and 10th grades were bussed to Washington, DC. They saw just about every historical monument and government building there is! Both parties came back exhausted but said they had lots of fun.

The 7th and 8th grades had only one-day trips, but fun ones. The ninth grade went to Sturbridge Village and the lower school, 7th and 8th, went to the Springfield science museum. Both trips came back tired, not as tired as the senior school, but tired. The trips didn't stop there! Wednesday, November 4, that nice warm, sunny day, everyone climbed on the busses for Mountain Day. This year it was Hogback in Wilmington, VT. Just as all the rest of the times, we came back tired and happy.

All of the soccer teams played an excellent season. The senior boys won 5 games out of 8 and tied 2 others. The senior girls won 4 out of 6 games. The junior team won 2 out of 7 and tied 2 games.

Well, the first half has been quite busy and the students see an even busier future, with a very major change. The Academy at Charlemont expects to move to the East Charlemont Bible Church when the school's lease runs out in 1989. The school hopes to acquire both buildings, the white school and the four-chimney brick house. "We don't expect to move the school before that time," said Eric A. Grinnell, the headmaster.

Well, that wraps it up. Happy Holidays.



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SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORT

by Budge Litchfield

Progress is being made on the repair of the Rowe School roof. The contractor is Dole Brothers of Shelburne who has fallen slightly behind the anticipated completion date of November 30. A fine is being levied on the contractor for each day that the work is not completed beyond the November 30 deadline. It is hoped, however, that the project will be wrapped up by December 10, just in time for the gymnasium to be used for the holiday season.

The Rowe School winter sports program offers three alternatives to the students this year. The choices are downhill skiing at Haystack, cross-country skiing at the nearby Hermitage, or snow-shoeing on the school grounds.

A recent reorganization of the school committee has taken place. Linda Marcotte is the representative for the Heath Public Pre-school, Budge Litchfield is the Rowe representative and chairman of the Heath Long Range Planning Committee, and Patrick Venneri is the representative to the Mohawk Regional School Committee.

Seasons greeting from your school committee, and best wishes for an educationally excellent 1988!



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THE HEATH BRANCH SCHOOL

by Mary Sherman

My first introduction to the Branch School was in 1951 when we moved to Heath in May, and in September our children started school. In 1873 the Branch School District selected a spot for their new school-house on land belonging to Edmond Gleason, the great grandfather of Earl and Walt Gleason. During 1950 the building had been enlarged and remodeled; classes had been held at the Community Hall and in the Center School under very difficult conditions. The teachers were Mr. Roswell Miller, Mrs. Ruth Kilgore and Mrs. Mabel Sears.

The newly remodeled school had three rooms, with Mr. Miller's and Mrs. Sears' rooms capable of being turned into an assembly room for Christmas parties and other meetings. An addition at the back had a furnace room, boys' and girls' toilets and a stock room, which in 1955 was turned into a cafeteria. The door was cut in half and a serving shelf added where the children picked up their lunches to eat at their desks.

Nada Stetson invited me to a meeting about starting a cafeteria and before I realized it I had been appointed chief cook and bottle washer!

So on Valentine's Day, 1955, the first meal was served. Most of the equipment, silverware and dishes were donated. The first refrigerator was a 2-door beehive General Electric. There were also Department of Agriculture donations as well as gifts of surplus garden items from local people. I served as cafeteria manager until I resigned in the late fall of 1955 when Muriel Stetson took over. She left in 1956 to attend college and Mrs. Leora Howes became manager, a post she held until 1960 when I returned.

I enjoyed my work; the children came and visited the kitchen and some of the first graders did their studying there. One of the older boys would come for lunch, take his plate and invariably say, "I don't think I'm going to like that," and he'd bring back an untouched plate! One day we had a call that the teachers had been in an accident. They asked me to keep order, so I assigned three older students to monitor the rooms and leave the doors open so I could hear. They did very well, and fortunately the teachers were only shaken up and were able to finish the day.

As some of the federal food donations were frozen, we had to rely on the kindness of various people with freezers to store the food, which was not very convenient. So we started to collect "Green Stamp" books for a freezer. It took a long time, but in 1962 we finally got enough through the kindness of the townspeople, and by the end of the spring term we had our freezer.

I resigned again, in 1962, at the end of two years of service because of my daughter's illness, and Nada Stetson took over until the school and cafeteria closed to merge with the Rowe School in 1968.

The teaching staff who had been there so long began to leave in 1958 and the school saw many new faces as teachers. Some of the children who attended in those days included John Stetson, my children Martha and Leland, Ray Galipo, Donna Smith, Mae Smith, Allen Corey, Arthur Crowningshield and the Giard girls.

The Branch School has seen many alterations since it was first built. It began as a one-room school, progressed to a two-room and ended as a three-room school with modern conveniences. But in all of its years it has furnished a good education for its students.

ROWE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWS

by Susan and Betsey Silvester

The end of the first academic quarter was Friday, November 5. An excellent attendance at the parent-teacher conferences was noted with report cards available at that time.

Early in November the entire student body in grades 1 - 6 travelled by bus to Sturbridge Village to study early American life. The field trip prompted many exciting class activities!

Fourth and fifth graders have just returned from a highly successful week-long environmental trip to Cape Cod. Science teacher Ruth Johnson of Heath organizes the Cape Cod excursions, and was assisted this year by chaperones Jane Wishart, Johanna Weinstein, Bob Rice and Paul Swen.

Sixth grade parents met recently with Mr. Schoenfeld to discuss the annual class trip. This year sixth graders will be travelling by Amtrak train to Washington, DC, for a week in May. Major fund-raising efforts are now in progress to raise approximately \$3,000 needed for the trip.

School dates to remember are:

- Dec. 14 All school trip to see the Nut Cracker Ballet (late afternoon return)
- Dec. 16 Holiday Concert 7:30 PM
- Dec. 22 Full day of school prior to Christmas vacation.

HEATH PRE-SCHOOL

by the Children of the Preschool

At the preschool this year we are playing in the house and painting pictures. We read books and go on walks. We play.

We went to the Browns' apple orchard. Then we went to the structure at the playground and went sliding and running. Sometimes we go to the swing set.

We went to blow glass at Bob Dane's and we went to Alan Nichols' orchard and brought back apples. Soon we will return to watch cider being pressed.

We are drawing squirrels gathering pine cones and acorns, and learning that there was lots of Friendship at the first Thanksgiving dinner.

NOTICE TO HEATH RESIDENTS

In preparation for snow removal, the Board of Selectmen is requesting that all parked vehicles be kept clear of the roads and shoulders of the Town Highways.

Parked vehicles hindering snow removal may be removed at owners' expense.



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HISTORICAL SOCIETY

by Michael Coe, President
Heath Historical Society

The weather predictions for October 10 couldn't have been worse: a front moving through our area was going to bring showers to us all day. However, happily for us, the predictions were up to their usual standard of accuracy. The day was beautiful.

Accordingly, the annual hike of the Heath and Rowe Historical Societies, with 34 participants, left the home of Jack and Nancy Williams on Middletown Hill, Rowe, at 10:15 AM in the Heath school bus driven by Cleon Peters.

Cleon dropped us at the Bear Swamp substation in the westernmost part of Rowe where we headed for the famous Pulpit Rock. Nancy Williams, a veteran hiker, led us north up the power line clearing; the climb was fairly steep, but we were rewarded with the sight of fringed gentians along the trail. After about one mile we headed west through beautiful woods to rocky ridges on the east rim of the deep gorge of the Deerfield River, 800 feet below. Proceeding north again, we arrived by noontime at the site of Pulpit Rock (the original rock slid into the gorge about 1910) where we picnicked. Needless to say, the views from these ridges are spectacular, certainly the finest in western Massachusetts: we could pick out Mt. Greylock and the spire of the Florida church to the west, and Haystack to the north in Vermont.

After our somewhat windy picnic, we headed east across the power line, then into the woods where we followed an old abandoned road. Eventually we came out on Hazelton Road, where Cleon picked us up at 1:45 for the return trip to the Williams' home.

Everyone felt that the annual hike was again an enjoyable success. Suggestions were made about next year's hike: several members expressed interest in a hike taking in Pocumtuck and/or Catamount Hill in Colrain. We will keep everyone informed as next year's date draws near. It is claimed that it never rains on a Yale Commencement. So far, this has been true for the H.H.S. annual hike. Let's hope it stays that way.

ANNUAL SKI RACE

Carol Sartz has announced that the fourth annual Heath X-Country Ski Race will be held this winter on Sunday, February 7. This successful 15/7 km event last year attracted over 200 entries and it is expected that even more will participate this year.

The usual shorter children's race will also be held at Heath Center.

Anyone wishing to volunteer to help in the race should contact Carol Sartz at 337-4977.



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HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

By Susan Silvester, Secretary

The Board of Directors met on November 13. President Michael Coe reported on the Town House restoration project. Local contractor Bruce Cromack has completed the painting, plastering and foundation work. In the spring the lawn will be reseeded and shrubs will be planted by local expert Dominic Musacchio. A rededication ceremony is tentatively planned to coincide with the next annual meeting in August.

The newly appointed curator for the Historical Society, Pegge Howland, discussed the need for an orderly, methodical plan for the preservation of artifacts. Priority will be given to photographs, pictures, maps and other paper products.

A recent gift of twelve boxes of books, papers and notes of the late Ruby Austin of Heath is presently being sorted and organized.

Also the Bank of Boston has generously donated an original 1904 copy of the Heath Telephone Company annual report. Mrs. Harris, a bank representative, found the document recently while cleaning out the bank's cellar. The early history of the Heath Telephone Company was well documented by Clyde Churchill in the bicentennial Book of Heath.

CHURCH NEWS

by Rachel Sumner

On Sunday, December 13, at 3:30 PM the Gather 'Round Singers will present a Christmas Carol Sing in the Church followed by the tree lighting and carols at the Center School house.

The Heath Union Church is sponsoring a Living Creche on Sunday, December 20, at 5 PM next to the Church. The storm date will be December 24. In 1980 the Reverend Ann Geer, minister at that time of the Heath Church, had the thought for a Living Creche and brought it into being. It was a beautiful drama of the Christmas event and the reenactment this year promises to be just as beautiful. Anyone willing to help or take part in this event is asked to contact Rachel Sumner. Light refreshments will be served after the service.

There will be a Christmas Eve Service in the Church. All are welcome.

After many months of searching for a new minister to be shared jointly with the Heath and Rowe churches, a mutual agreement could not be reached on a suitable selection. According to a vote taken by the Rowe Church on November 19, the two churches will no longer be "yoked." It has therefore been agreed for each church to go its own way and Heath is hoping to find an interim minister shortly. In the meantime the Reverend Allen Comstock, who has been filling in on Sundays, will continue to conduct the regular 11 AM service. We welcome all to join in this service and children are invited to participate in our Sunday School held at the same time.

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ROAD PROBLEMS

by Ray Galipo
Heath Road Superintendent

When I took over as Road Superintendent in August there was a considerable amount of work to be done resulting from the April flooding of roads as well as general maintenance. Before you think it, I will say it, there is still a lot more to be done.

The project which is most noticeable is Burrington Hill, which is about complete except for the shoulder and guard rails (next on agenda, if snow holds off). Please be careful when using on slippery days.

Other roads have had extensive work done on them but only with regard to getting them ready for winter, so we could at least get plows over them.

In November we spent most of our time getting equipment in shape for plowing and sanding. At present all sanders (3) and trucks (4) and other equipment are ready to roll.

In 1988 we do have a small grant for some paving to be done on 8A, which will enable us to pave approximately a mile to a mile and a half. Hopefully, this will continue each year so as to better our town and its roads.

So with this in mind, let us look down the road for 1988 and hope some of you have a more enjoyable ride back and forth to work without cursing the Road Superintendent too much.

To you and yours, have a Merry Christmas and a smoother ride in the coming year.

TOWN CLERK/ASSESSORS' CLERK

Karen MacDougall, as assessors' clerk has just completed a six-session course at the Holyoke Community College which has given her a good background in the numerous state assessors' regulations. She is now in the process of entering the over 1000 town property records into the computer to be used for the town tax billing and collection.

In addition Karen is setting up a computer tabulation of the status and conditions of all town roads. This is to be used by the selectmen in their long range road planning.

The Town Clerk's office hours are now Tuesdays from 6:30 to 7:30 PM and Wednesdays from 8 to 11 AM. In addition she can be reached at 337-4268 for any special appointment.

ASSESSORS' REPORT

We have been laboring slowly to value the new buildings and to bring the addresses up to date. Our meetings seem to be mostly consumed with paper work; i.e., abatements, exemptions and tax payer requests. So the valuation of new properties has to be done at other times. Those times seem very hard to find. We are getting there, though.

We hope everyone will forgive us if we fail to get the bills out for Christmas. They'll be something to look forward to in the new year.

Howard Crowningshield

Building & Remodeling

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PLANNING BOARD REPORT

by Bob Dane, Secretary

Susan Wright and Gwen Hallsmith attended our October meeting to inform us of the procedures we are to follow in the process of administering the Strategic Planning Grant. They have sent out requests for proposals to various consultants in Massachusetts, the majority being based in the western part of the state. We will review the applications soon and will choose three or four to invite for interviews. From these interviews we (the Planning Board and the Task Force) will select the consultant we feel will do the best job. We hope that the hiring will be completed quickly so that work can begin soon after the first of the year.

The job of the consultant will be twofold. First the consultant will write the revisions to our Zoning Bylaws with our help and input. The second part of the task will be a public education/information program. This will involve publishing articles in the HEATH HERALD to keep people up to date on the progress of the project, the organization of workshops covering different planning issues, and coordination of "neighborhood kitchen meetings" where small groups of townspeople will gather to discuss planning issues raised at the workshops. The workshops will include presentations by professional planners covering such issues as back lot development, cluster development, commercial development, water resource protection, and phased growth bylaws. The "kitchen meetings" will be attended by local people only and will give them a chance to discuss these issues in depth as they relate to the town and its landowners.

During the last two months the County Planning Office held two workshops on the revision of zoning bylaws. Alastair Maitland and Bob Dane attended both workshops. These meetings were very informative and helped us to understand some of the things that could be included in the re-writing of our bylaws. The two areas of discussion were the "Basic Zoning Agenda" and the "High Tech Zoning Agenda." "Basic" dealt with areas which must be addressed in our bylaws such as Use and Dimensional Regulations and Environmental Controls. "High Tech" covered areas which we may choose to include such as Cluster Zoning, Site Plan Review and Phased Growth Bylaws. These workshops will give us a jump on the process of working with the consultant so that we can move the process along as swiftly as possible.

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PERCS PERMITS AND TRANSFERS

October and November 1987

Land Transfers

Paul and Alice Lemelin and George Tikky to Edward and Margaret Boudreau of Williamstown, Ben Road, Lot B. \$15,000.

Richard Marcotte to Stephen and Linda Marcotte, Sumner-Stetson Road, \$16,000.

John and Rita Bouthillette to Stephen Dyer of Auburndale, Mohawk Estates, Lot 15, \$3,600.

Lucia Finck to Bruce and Walter Phillips of Clinton, Route 8A, \$123,000.

Robert Guay to Edmund Guay of Chicopee, Swamp Road, Lot 44, no consideration.

Stephen Koretz to Alphonse and Ruth Maslak of Holyoke, Mohawk Estates, Lots 52 & 53, \$3,000.

David and Debra Lavigne to Charles Elsworth, Jr. and Sandra Kennedy of Whatley, Sumner-Stetson Road, \$17,500.

Arthur Crowningshield to Gerald and Angie Turner of Charlemont, A.L. Stetson Road, \$86,500.

Gary Constantilos to Mario and Joanne Giroux of South Windsor, CT, and Ronald and Johanne Guimond, Waterfall Drive, Lot 26, \$2,000.

David and Debra Lavigne to Patricia Gates, Mary Suchanek and Wayne Tetreault, all of Gill, Sumner-Stetson Road, \$35,000.

Raymond and Teresa Pettengill to Kirk and Sandra Pettengill of Buckland, State Farm Road, no consideration.

Robert and Nancy Blodgett to Harry and Delores Hall of Springfield, Deer Run Path, Lot 4, \$1,200.

Lorraine Lachance to Tina Houle of Chicopee, Mohawk Estates, Lots 32 & 33, \$2,000.

Rockwell and Marilyn Lively to Robert and Marian Spritzer of Long Beach, NY, Deer Path Run, Lots 41 & 42, \$30,000.

Lori Johnson to Daryll McCloud, Mohawk Estates, Lot 1, \$40,900.

David Knott, executor of Mabel Vreeland Estate, to David and Dorothy Brooks, Knott Road, less than \$100.

Arthur and Jeanette Bourdon to Eugene and Sonia Smith of Holyoke, Mohawk Estates, Lot 5, \$4,500.

Wallace and Helen Russo to Allyn Coombs, Inc., Underwood Hill Road, \$150,000.

Robert Bergquist to Robert and Christine Fraser Bergquist, of Maseru, Lesotho, South Africa, Bray Road, Parcels A & B. \$1.

Marilyn S. Moreau to George Moreau of North Adams, Mohawk Estates, Lots 1 & 2, \$1.

Arthur and Dora Jackson to Ned Edwards and Gwendolyn Couch-Edwards of Farmington, CT, Jacksonville Stage Road, \$42,000.

Cindy and Ronnie Parker to Donald and Michelle Emerson of Greenfield, Ben Road, \$54,000.

Earl Gleason to Christopher Burke and Karen Brooks, Long Hill Road and Dell Hill Road, \$20,000.

William and Myrna Wait to Timothy and Maria Donovan of Middle Village, NY, Colrain Brook Road, \$22,500.

Stanley and Grace Bump to Bryan and Martha Gurney of Williamstown, 4 Flag Hill, \$1.

Alfred Dragunas to James Gleason and Sarah Hettlinger, Colrain Stage Road, \$62,000.

BUILDING PERMITS

Leo Thomas, Flag Hill Road, one-family; Stephen Marcotte, Sumner Stetson Road, one-family. Total \$96,000.

PERC TESTS

A total of 23 perc tests were conducted during this period of which 11 failed and 12 passed.

SELECTMEN'S REPORT

by Richard Giard, Chairman
Heath Board of Selectmen

Elizabeth Beaudoin has been appointed by the Selectmen to fill the position of Tax Collector vacated by the resignation of Linda Marcotte. She will serve in this capacity until the next town election next May.

On town Roads: Culverts have been replaced on Colrain Road and Rowe Road. The Dell Road, washed out in the April flood, has been regraded and rocks embedded to prevent additional erosion, as well as culverts replaced. New guard rails are also being erected. This is covered by FHA funding. So far only \$86,000 of the FEMA money for the flood damage has been received. However, we expect a total of \$184,000 to be available, a combination of FEMA, state and town money, and an additional \$70,000 from FHA. The town may still be able to borrow against these grants, in anticipation of compensation, but the interest on such borrowing must be paid by the town.

The town Ford truck has just had to have its diesel engine rebuilt at a cost of about \$5000. This engine was replaced last January with a used engine. As a result we should be in good shape for this winter's snow plowing. A motor on one of the sanders was just replaced at a cost of \$900.

Almer Huntley, Jr. Associates, of Northampton, has given us a proposal for the design of the new solid waste transfer station site and will follow through with specifications for the compactor, transportation and preparation of the site. In the meantime we hope for an extension of the lease on our present landfill until after the Springfield/Vicon operation is opened. Almer Huntley, who prepared the design on our present landfill in 1971, is also working on the design for closing of the landfill.

An agreement has just been reached with the towns of Charlemont, Hawley and Heath for the employment of a shared administrative assistant to replace Susan Wright who will leave this position, formerly shared with Shelburne, Buckland and Colrain. This would be effective next July 1 and would be subject to approval at our town meeting next May. It will be hard to replace the excellent service of Susan Wright, but she has assured us that she will work with us to locate a suitable successor.

The Selectmen have announced a ban on plowing any snow from a driveway on to a town road unless it is promptly removed by the landowner. This is essential if we can maintain reasonable travel conditions on our town roads. Also the parking of any vehicle on a town right of way is prohibited during snow conditions on the town roads. These vehicles will be removed at owners' expense. This is necessary again to enable town snow plows to properly remove snow from the town highways.

Another Round Table meeting is planned for January 13, 1988, at 8:00 PM in the Community Hall to discuss economic development in the Town of Heath. A study was prepared on this subject by Jay Di Pucchio, Program Manager at the Franklin County Development Corporation. Jay is planning to attend this Round Table meeting.

As we approach the end of one calendar year and the beginning of another, it becomes time for all department and boards to start preparing their FY '89 budgets.

The Board wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Safe New Year.



HEATH'S VOLUNTEER FIREMEN

On November 10 an early morning chimney fire in one of our wood stove flues seemed to be quickly extinguished when the stove was completely shut up. However, the fire had roared up the flue leaving the thick chimney brick walls very hot. Thinking everything was under control, and after feeling that the warm bricks on the exposed chimney in the attic were not excessively hot, I left the house about noon to go to Computer Town in Keene, with Caroline in charge.

Soon after my departure, Caroline, in her usual concerned way, went again to the attic to be sure all was safe. Much to her surprise there was smoke pouring through the floor around one of the chimneys and the smoke detector (which could not be heard on the floor below) was chirping away.

Caroline immediately got Edith Gleason on the phone and within ten minutes firemen began to appear at our place followed by Engine No. 1. Wasting no time the firemen swarmed through the house around the smoldering chimney trying to locate the source of the smoke. After much careful demolition of the attic floor, a closet ceiling, an old cabinet wall, and the removal of bushels of insulation with many old corn cobs embedded, the firemen located the source. The fire was put out with fire extinguishers and with a few glasses of water carefully poured into the critical area.

Without the prompt response of our Fire Department and, if Caroline had decided to go with me to Keene, another 175 year old house would have probably become just a cellar hole, joining the others that are the only remaining indication of the many people who once lived in Heath.

Although Chief Earl Gleason was out of town that day, his well trained crew of firemen are commended on their prompt response, their knowledge in locating and extinguishing the fire, on the care they used in breaking through walls and partitions, and in cleaning up before they left. In particular Deputy Chief "Steiny" did an excellent job of directing the whole process. Steve Belitsos showed his usual courage in climbing up the slippery roof to the top of the 28 foot chimney - even with rain and snow starting to fall - while others crawled into inaccessible places to locate the fire.

To cap it off "Steiny" made a return trip here that evening to insure that all was under control. His concern is greatly appreciated.

Not enough can be said in praise of the Heath Volunteer Fire Department. We think of Heath becoming a bedroom community but when ten men (including our full Road Crew) turn out within minutes on a work day to help in an emergency we should all be thankful to live in a town with such a dedicated and unselfish organization.

.. Newland Smith

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FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

By Chief Earl Gleason

The Heath Fire Department logged five calls during October and November. The first was on October 3 when the tanker was dispatched to Hawley for a structure fire caused by using gasoline to start a fire in a fireplace. Two days later two EMT's and a fireman aided the Colrain Ambulance on a call on Brunelle Road. Next was a partition fire on Hosmer Road on November 10 with Captain Steinbock the commanding officer. Four EMT's and three firemen responded to Colrain Stage Road to aid the Charlemont Ambulance on Thanksgiving Day. On November 28 several firemen extinguished a truck fire on Judd Road.

The Mass. Fire Academy (MFA) figured prominently in our training recently. An MFA regional school was held in Heath on the evening of October 10. The class was on pumps and hydraulics. Another MFA Regional School was held in Shelburne Falls on Breathing Apparatus and Search and Rescue. Two of the Heath personnel took this class. Our November drill was presented by Deputy Chief Lively of the Greenfield Fire Department on Structural Hazards. This is one of the MFA impact series classes. The Chief also attended an MFA class sponsored by Elkhart Brass on the repair of valves and nozzles. He is currently attending an MFA regional school on Multiple Company Operations being held in Northfield.

Five smoke detector inspections and one oil burner inspection were conducted during the past two months. One oil storage permit was granted. Seven meeting of regional organizations were attended.

After a few of our more bulky members (who shall remain nameless) had reduced some of our wooden folding chairs to kindling, we decided to acquire some new chairs. Twelve new sturdy chairs with padded seats were procured through the surplus property division of the Forestry Service. So if you have been avoiding joining the Fire Department because our chairs were uncomfortable, or thought you would be embarrassed if you broke one of our chairs, you no longer have an excuse. See you at the next meeting.

The December drill will be held on December 17 at 7 PM and there will be another MFA class with Deputy Chief Lively of the Greenfield Fire Department. The class will be on Wildfires.

POLICE REPORT IT

by Guy Silvester, Chief
Heath Police Department

With the arrival of cold weather, things have begun to quiet down. Patrols are still being conducted on a regular basis. The use of radar on Heath roads is part of the overall patrol routine. Motorists are urged to slow down and drive safely, especially as winter road conditions necessitate careful driving.

The Heath Police Department wishes you and your families a very safe, enjoyable Holiday Season.

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HEATH CONSERVATION COMMISSION

by Bill Lattrell, Chairman

The Heath Conservation Commission is in the process of wrapping up the busiest season it has had in its three years of service. There seemed to be a flurry of "before winter" requests in early October. The Commission was able to process all applications. Following are the applications received and processed and actions taken: Charles Marney, Colrain Brook Road. Request for determination - It was determined that the project would have no significant impact on wetlands (negative determination); Stephen and Linda Marcotte, Sumner-Stetson Road - negative determination; George Tongas, Swamp Road - negative determination; William Ford, Papoose Lake Drive - negative determination; Elizabeth and Albert Canali, Notice of Intent - accepted - Order of Conditions issued; Dorothy Stankowicz, Route 8A, Enforcement Order, situation resolved with representatives; Dominic Musacchio, Swamp Road, Enforcement Order, situation resolved with owner.

Each application and action above took an average of 7 - 10 hours to process, hear and act upon. We are looking forward to a long winter of planning.

In other news new wetland protection regulations took effect on November 1. Wildlife habitat and endangered species are now part of the statute for each resource area. The guidelines are very detailed. The Heath Commission plans on doing a full report to the town on these new regulations in the next number of the HEATH HERALD.

TAX COLLECTOR

by Elizabeth Beaudoin
Collector of Taxes

Linda Marcotte resigned as Tax Collector effective November 1 and I have been appointed to complete her term. The new tax collector's hours are Monday evenings from 7:30 to 10:00 PM, Wednesdays from 8:00 to 9:00 PM and by appointment. Please call me at home, 337-4260 if you need to schedule an appointment.

My first big job has been to mail the demands for the 1987 tax year. Approximately 150 real estate and personal property demands were mailed on December 1. Some motor vehicle demands were mailed in November and the remainder should be going out this month.

Linda has done a really remarkable job of collecting back taxes and has recovered a lot of lost revenue for the town. Much of the money owed in unpaid real estate taxes has been collected or payments are being made. However, many motor vehicle excise taxes from previous years are still outstanding and collection of these taxes must be pursued.

The town budget is too tight this year to provide the tax collector with a desk at the town hall. If anyone has an old desk that they could donate or loan for this purpose, it would be greatly appreciated.

BED & BREAKFAST

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Route 8A

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FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

by David F. Howland

As 1987 draws to a close the FinCom can report that the town has not had to borrow monies thus far in the current fiscal year. This is due primarily to the State's new practice of making Cherry Sheet payments on a quarterly basis, for example, to the Mohawk School, and the town's solvent cash position. However, it has become necessary to get his year's tax bills out soon, if we are to avoid borrowing; we are told that they should be mailed about the first of the year. (Taxpayers can pay an estimated tax before December 31, to benefit their own income tax deductions for 1987, if they so choose).

The budget process for FY 1988-89 is underway in the school systems while the town will begin its deliberations in January. A new computer software program for the budget process has been acquired by the town. It provides more detail and greater forecasting capability than the program used for the past few years. Dave Howland attended a training session on this program that was conducted by Computer Productivity Associates, our supplier of the software.

The advent of personal computers at the small town level has improved general bookkeeping and reporting services locally and provides the state with information retrieval capability it never had before. For example, all towns must file by October 31 each year a comprehensive statement of revenues and expenditures for the previous year known as Schedule A. This is used as a tool by the state in the awarding of local aid and, in these days of Proposition 2 1/2, these awards are very important. To get all that information in a timely fashion from 351 cities and towns was practically impossible without the aid of personal computers. This year our Town Accountant has had to manually prepare this Schedule A. However, the new accounting software will provide this report more promptly in the future.

By the next report in the HERALD we should have property valuation data that will give us some sense of our budgetary parameters for the next year. We will keep you informed.



HEATH COUNCIL ON AGING

by Alli Thane

On November 18 the Council on Aging met with Charlemont and Hawley to discuss ways of joining together in activities.

One matter discussed was tours to various educational places on Morgan tour buses: places such as Historic Concord, the Kennedy Library, the Rockwell Museum, Lowell Mill Tour and others. Other matters discussed were the availability of "meals on wheels," an FRTA bus for shopping trips and forming a three-town Consortium.

The towns agreed to invite a member from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs in Boston to meet with us in January in an advisory capacity. In preparation for this the towns will be preparing a questionnaire to be mailed out to all townspeople 60 years and over. Please watch for this and give us your answers and suggestions or call one of the Council members. They are Sheila Litchfield, chairperson, Mary Smith, Ruth Fournier, Dorothy Sessions and Alli Thane.

THE FRANKLIN LAND TRUST

by Herald Staff

One of the key players in local efforts to protect and preserve the farmland, open space and rural character of western Franklin County is the Franklin Land Trust.

The Franklin Land Trust is one of no less than 536 land trusts, nation-wide - all of them private, non-profit organizations, local and regional, with similar goals.

Readers of the local and daily press will be aware of two of the Franklin Land Trust's most notable recent successes, the center-pieces of which were the Loomis farm in Ashfield and the Ben Albert potato farm straddling the Hawley-Ashfield border. The bulk of the farmland in each case was preserved and will remain in active farming.

The Franklin Land Trust is a strictly local association, made up of farmers and other hill-town residents. Where farmland is being offered for sale for development the Trust may intervene and seek to pre-empt the land, financing its acquisitions from a revolving fund derived from private contributions, loans of cash and collateral from its membership and income generated by the limited development or resale of acquired parcels of land.

The Trust does not aim to become the owner of large tracts of land but rather to acquire and retain endangered farmland for only as long as is necessary to ensure that the land remains in active farming and that the forested portions of any site that is acquired are carefully and sensitively developed only to the extent required to finance the project. Agricultural portions of endangered farms purchased by the Trust will be sold at reduced cost to neighboring farms or to farmers seeking to buy working farms. Legally-binding restrictions will first be placed on the land to be sold to ensure that it remains permanently in agricultural or open space use.

Forested portions of acquired farms not valuable from an agricultural, scenic or open space point of view may be resold, with siting and design controls, for development of a limited number of residential lots. This limited development will help finance the preservation of the portions of each property that are valuable for farming.

In addition to preserving large tracts of farmland, the Trust is ready to advise local farmers or landowners who do not want to sell their land on alternatives to the sale of frontage lots as a means of acquiring working capital to maintain their operations. The Trust will help landowners implement limited development projects for non-agricultural portions of their land in exchange for restricting development on their prime farmland. Good site planning and design principles will be applied in these situations to ensure that limited development on existing farms will have minimal impact on the farm's continued operation, or on the land's scenic, open space and environmental qualities. This will allow farms in distress to produce income from marginal lands without jeopardizing the agricultural portions of the property.

The Trust has adopted a policy of offering some of its limited development lots for resale at moderate prices, in order to avoid the creation of exclusive neighborhoods and to help meet the need for "affordable housing" in the area. A pilot project is now pending in Ashfield, where two house lots created by the Loomis farm have been designated as "affordable housing" lots. The lots are to be offered for sale at 30 percent of the market value. The houses to be built on them will be constructed with local timber and it is hoped that the buyers will be able to obtain Homeowner Opportunity Program loans at 5 percent interest with a 5 percent down payment. Restrictions will be placed on the resale of the properties in order to maintain the price levels at below market value.

Another technique for the preservation of open space, on which the Franklin Land Trust can provide advice and assistance, is the conservation easement, by which the landowner retains ownership but imposes restrictions on the use of the land conveyed to the land trust. An easement in perpetuity granted to a public or private agency is recorded in the Registry of Deeds and is legally binding on all future owners, regardless of whether title to the land is transferred by sale, gift or testamentary provision.

The project director of the Franklin Land Trust is Mark Zenick, of Ashfield (telephone 413-628-4696). He will be glad to answer enquiries from anyone in agriculture or anyone otherwise concerned about farmland and open space in western Franklin County. And he will be particularly interested to receive prompt notification from the Town of any pending sale of land classified under Chapter 61 (forest) or 61A (agriculture).



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VENNERI STRIVES FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

by Susan Silvester

The once small town of Stamford, Connecticut, is now a thriving megalopolis. It also boasts a successful and industrious native son, Patrick Venneri, now of Heath.

Patrick, called Skip by his friends, attended the elementary schools there. In the first month of his sophomore year, he quit high school to enter the army. His four service roommates in Iceland all had no less than a master's degree and, at their insistence, he was forced to get a GED (General Educational Development Test). At the same time he commenced a college career which is still in full swing. At the University of Maryland, an off campus branch in Iceland, Patrick earned 15 college credits. As a high school drop out, he returned to Stamford to see his class graduate - the class was receiving diplomas, while he had received a GED plus five college courses!

Still in the army, Patrick continued to attend college at the University of Georgia, where English literature became his passion. The Army paid for 70% of the tuition and for his voluminous collection of books. His duties for the government were structured around his classes, since education was encouraged.

In September of 1959 Patrick was released from the service. For the next ten years he studied "massive amounts" of English literature. At Southern Connecticut State College, New Haven College and SUNY at Buffalo, he "used up" the English departments and proceeded to the next institution. Patrick never stayed long enough to acquire the elusive embossed sheepskin but he did manage to accumulate vast areas of expertise in English literature.

There were some interim years of self examination, much soul-searching and a Thoreau-like existence in the woods of the scenic Catskills. Patrick lived alone in a cabin contemplating life, his in particular. Then a cousin asked him to build a cabin for him in Heath. That was his first, brief encounter with this part of the state.

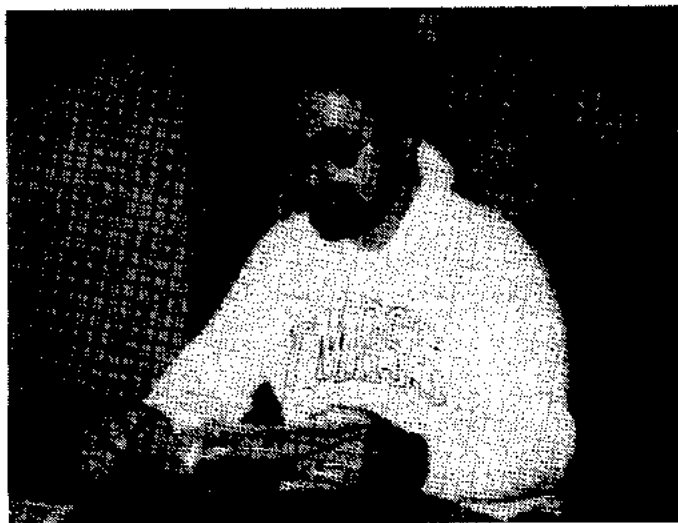
The next year, 1974, Patrick met Patricia, who became his wife. They set up housekeeping in Stamford, where a variety of jobs provided the basic necessities of life. As a substitute teacher, life was far from dull. Then in 1978 Patrick's cousin offered him an opportunity to purchase the little cabin he had built in Heath. When the move was accomplished, Patrick commenced work at nearby Kendall Mills.

The early years were difficult with a family. There were no lights, no electricity, no running water, and no bath. Conditions were primitive, especially with a new baby, three month old Rocco. A wood burning stove and kerosene lamps gave warmth and light to the snug little cabin on the hill.

In 1984 Patrick suffered an injury on the job and was unable to continue with the type of work he had been doing. Workmen's compensation provided the opportunity to complete his Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. It was in December 1986 that he received his first real degree. In May of that year he enrolled in the MA/PhD program in the English department. On November 30, 1987, Patrick passed his comprehensive oral examination, for which he had studied day and night since May. The qualifying examination allows him to continue through the gruelling doctoral program, which he hopes to complete in three years of full concentration. Patrick's dissertation will focus on either Fielding or female playwrights and novelists of the 18th century. His major career goal is to teach English at the college level.

Everyone in the family is a full time student now. His wife, Patricia, attends Smith College where she is majoring in theater. Patty is a playwright who has just begun to discover her own talents. Karen, age 15, attends Mohawk as does Luke, age 12. Jeremiah, age 11, and Rocco, 9, both attend the Rowe Elementary School.

Patrick was elected to the Heath School Committee in 1982 and has continued to serve the school district and community in the field of education. His goals for educational excellence, matched only by his own self-imposed high standards of academic achievement, make him a credit to the community.



Skip Venneri, English Scholar
(Photo by Sue Silvester)



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LETTER FROM AFRICA

by Betsy Reilley

[Betsy Reilley, daughter of Pat and Henry Leuchtman, is living in Kenya as a Peace Corps volunteer. She is stationed in Kitale, in the southwestern part of Kenya near the Uganda border]

I'm living in a mud hut that has three rooms. There is no plumbing or electricity so I use an outhouse and a little wood stove for cooking. At first I didn't know how I'd do, but you get used to living with less pretty quickly and I like knowing that I'm living the Kenyan life.

The village is called Munyaka (which means 'good luck' in Kikuyu). You could picture this area like Heath, but imagine more open flat land with very few trees. Then add some gently rolling, but large, hills which surround many small valleys. Houses are a little closer together than they are in Heath. Often there will be two or three or four houses in a compound for an extended family. There are only a few dirt roads, but many paths/shortcuts between the houses or to the 'duka' or store. I often walk a distance as far as from your house to Heath Center, about 1 1/2 hours, to visit the nearest other Peace Corps volunteer, Karen, or check one of the projects I'm working with.

One of my projects is with the Upendo Women's Group which runs a chicken/egg project. There's a beautiful large, well organized, coop with 180 hens. The eggs are sold in Kitale. According to my predecessor's calculations it will take 90 eggs a day to break even, and that is usually what they collect even though they should be able to collect 140. My job is to explain again that they will get more money if they get more eggs, and that it's important to make sure waterers are working and that the hens get enough feed and medicine. The group is getting another 300 chicks soon to put in the new henhouse they built.

There are a couple of zero-grazing projects here. Basically I explain the theory of zero-grazing and how important it is to ALWAYS bring the cow water, napier grass (very common cow fodder in Kenya) and grain, a lupin-maize mix that is grown here and is high in protein. People get lazy and just let the cow graze which destroys the whole purpose and milk production goes down. Africans don't have good understanding of cause and effect at all.

Today I went to the Munyaka Water project. Three springs have been piped together to a storage tank. I went to the spring, that hasn't been working, with four men who took apart the pipes, put them back together, took the spring box apart and put it together, then disassembled and reassembled the pipes again. After each attempt we thought we had solved the problem. Water began flowing. But after a few minutes it stopped. Finally, I decided it must be an

air-block in the pipeline, even though there is an air relief pipe. I had them open up the end of the pipeline about a quarter mile away and, sure enough, air came sputtering out and then water. Success!

My role was totally as a supervisor/organizer. I was really glad to gain some credibility with them and with myself. I did get muddy (checking the pipes and the spring), but for the most part they did the labor and I gave suggestions. They know how to do a lot of this stuff but they need someone to organize and direct things. I guess something like an air block is more confusing to understand. I don't even totally understand how an air block works in a gravity feed system on hilly terrain, but I'm learning.

As you can probably imagine, I learned a lot during the training the Peace Corps gave us and from all the reading material they gave out. I didn't know any of this before. As I work, I'm always learning.

That's what it's like so far. People often approach me with requests and projects. They all know I'm here - I definitely stand out.

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TREE LIGHTING AND CAROL SING

The Heath Union Church is again sponsoring the Annual Christmas Concert presented by the Gather 'Round Singers on Sunday, December 13. The concert, starting at 3:30 PM in the Heath Church, will be followed by the lighting of the Christmas Tree and carol sing at the old Center School House.

Everyone is invited to participate in this annual event and to enjoy the refreshments, provided by the Heath Historical Society, following at the Community Hall. The HEATH HERALD originated this tree lighting and carol sing in 1984 and it has become an event looked forward to during the Christmas Season.

OUR CHRISTMAS COVER

The winter scene of "Heath Center in 1900" on our front cover this month is a rendering in watercolor and ink by Fred Burrington. It is his interpretation of a photograph by the late Edward P. Guild which is the frontispiece of the Heath Sesquicentennial Anniversary book.

Fred is a self-taught artist and prefers to work in watercolors and wood sculpture. His famous loon sculptures, made from native woods, are on display at the Salmon Falls Marketplace in Shelburne Falls. Part of the proceeds from the sale of his loons go to the North American Loon Fund for the preservation of loons.

This talented young artist is only 23 years old, was born and raised in Heath and is the son of Nancy and Paul Burrington. He presently lives at Myrifielld on Avery Brook Road.

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Merry Christmas



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DID YOU KNOW?

by Herald Staff

Did you know . . .

1. that between 1965 and this year the population of Heath doubled, from 300 to over 600?

2. that ours is a relatively youthful population and that the number of Heath families with children grew by 97 percent in the decade between 1970 and 1980?

3. that in 1980 the median family income in Heath was well below the State and County norms and that nearly one fifth of the population was below the poverty limit?

4. that Heath's recent unemployment history (1980-85) is consistently below the County average?

5. that nearly one fifth of the town's employable population identify themselves as self-employed workers?

6. that forest covers 83 percent of the Heath terrain?

7. that small-scale manufacturing is a growing sector of Heath's economy, with some 20 craftspeople and artisans deriving all or a significant portion of their income from craft production (weaving, woodwork and pottery being the major craft products)?

These and other interesting facts and figures are to be found in a recent Economic Development and Planning Study prepared for the Town of Heath by Jay Di Pucchio of the Franklin County Development Corporation with grant support from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Communities and Development's Small Cities Program.

The study's central finding is that most of Heath's new businesses have come from residents, and will continue to do so. Providing for their growth and retaining them in Heath as they become successful should be at the heart of Heath's economic planning.

Mr. Di Pucchio's study has been submitted to the Selectmen, the Planning Board and the Planning Board Task Force. They are expected to meet with him early in the new year to discuss his findings and recommendations and to consider how the study may contribute to the elucidation of the issues to be addressed by the Strategic Planning Study (announced in the last issue of the HEATH HERALD).

LADIES AID CHRISTMAS SALE

The Ladies Aid held a very successful Christmas Sale at the Community Hall on November 7. About \$550 was realized. Many thanks go to all who helped in any way. The Christmas party will be held on December 17. There will be no meetings over the winter but they will start again in April.

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