



# HEATH HERALD

## Heath's First Newspaper

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## Happy Holidays



### Christmases Past

Christmas and thoughts of Christmases past take years off my life as I relive those special times in my growing-up years in North Heath. I can hear and smell the corn popping as my grandmother shuttles the popper atop the woodburning kitchen range. Bushels of those big white clouds, poured into the enamel dishpan, are made ready to be molded into golden, sticky balls, as the molasses, cooked to boiling and frothing up as baking soda is added, is drizzled over them. I remember pitching in to help, buttering my hands to avoid sticking, rolling and molding the coated kernels into perfect balls. We set each one on a platter to be cooled off on the porch. Mounds and mounds of golden balls, ready to be packed and wrapped for mailing to grandchildren in West Springfield and Greenfield. There were always enough left over for the family here at home. This was Grandma Stetson's Christmas gift, lovingly crafted and sent with homely messages.

When I think of the lengths to which I went for my own children's Christmases I remember the simple rituals my family enjoyed. My brothers and I would trudge through the woods beyond the barn to find a suitable spruce tree, not too tall, never groomed or pruned to perfection as they are today, but just right for our living room where it would be set into a wooden stand fashioned by my grandfather years before. Perhaps it was a little tippy and lopsided, but who noticed when we had strung the paper chains we had fashioned from wallpaper scraps glued together on the dining room table. The few Christmas balls we had were cherished for their simple beauty as were the strands of tinsel hung with care to catch the light from the tiny candles perched on the branches with little pinchers and tin-foil drip circles to catch the melting wax.

Our handmade stockings were hung, not in the fireplace, closed to preserve heat, but hung from the mantle behind the Glenwood stove in the dining room. On Christmas morning we stumbled out of our feather beds into our freezing bedrooms, rushing down the stairs to check out our stockings. There was nothing fancy in those days- always an orange, a couple walnuts, a candy cane hung over the edge and some little surprise for each of us. I don't remember what they were, but probably a toy, a harmonica for the boys, a paint set or crayons and a coloring book.

("Christmases Past" continued on page 3)



### Christmas Morning

In the east the salmon sky  
Each passing moment pales  
The cinctured waters whisper  
Beneath their crystal veils

The forest maidens gather round  
Wrapped in their shawls of white  
And turn their faces evergreen  
Up to the newborn light

Sunrise upon the snow calls forth  
The rainbow's every hue -  
Countless points of prisms light  
Spark violet, amber, blue

Through sylvan halls, down aisles of green  
A joyful music swells  
The songs of finch and cardinal  
Ring bright and clear as bells

Made holy by the earth, the sky,  
By rock and living tree -  
Within this sheltered woodland shrine  
I find true sanctity

And as winter lays his calming hand  
Upon the mountain's face  
The woods are stilled in reverence.  
The land is touched with grace.

~ Christine Anthony

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## Church News

## Christmas Reflections

By Hilma Sumner, Minister

Advent is a time of anticipation and of change, looking forward to the birth of Jesus, the Savior. In the church the four weeks preceding Christmas are spent reflecting on this focal point on which history and even our calendar are hinged. While the retail world anticipates increases in its bottom line, the Christian church welcomes another opportunity of increase in the heart and soul of each humble seeker.

Our church will once again be having a special Christmas Eve service at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 24. The candlelight service will include selected readings and seasonal music. Due to the fact that this service will be on Saturday evening, there will be no church service on Christmas day. We will return to our regular 10:00 a.m. worship service on January 1.

This season brings another change for the church and for me, as well. On November 27 I announced my resignation as minister of the church to become effective on December 31. I am grateful for the opportunity that I have had over the past three years to serve the church and the community in that capacity. It is a decision that I made with much regret but also with anticipation as I shall be devoting my time and energies as a full-time, master's degree in psychology student beginning in January.

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(*"Christmases Past"* continued from page 1)

But Christmas Eve at our house was the main event when we opened up our "main" presents. After the barn chores were finished, the supper dishes washed and stacked, we gathered in the living room around the tree with its flickering candles and warmth from the "Heatrola" welcoming our "oohing" and "aahing" as we opened our gifts. I remember once there was a five-year diary, another year a longed-for paint set, and when I was twelve, my own Bible with a zippered case which I still have to this day. Of course we all waited for our parents and grandma to open home-made (or school-made) gifts each of us had wrapped for them.

When all the presents were opened Grandma brought on the popcorn balls and hot cocoa, then off we trudged with our flannel-wrapped, soapstone foot warmers, up the stairs to get tucked into our cold beds with their flannel sheets and heavy quilts.

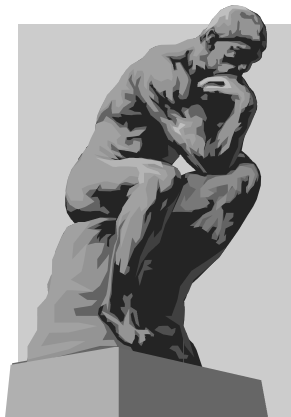
I especially remember our school celebrations, a time when it was politically correct to sing Christmas carols and work on a pageant to present for our parents. On the Fridays before we made cutouts for the windows during art time, and decorations for the live tree set in a corner of our one-room school. There were practice times and costume making for the live nativity scene. I still recall the jealous feelings I harbored for never being chosen to be Mary. We often enacted Dickens' *Christmas Carol*. One of my brothers usually portrayed "Scrooge," and little Donny Smith was always "Tiny Tim." Santa arrived to the singing of "Jingle Bells" and "ho-hoes," and handed out gifts from the teacher. (I wonder now how she could afford them when I realize how little she got paid.)

Sometime between Christmas and New Year's Day we would make a trip to our cousins in West Springfield (my father's brother's family). In those days our only vehicle was a truck, fitted with side boards. My mother sat in the front with my dad, and we were all bundled up with heavy coats, mittens, and hats, surrounded with warm horse blankets sitting in the open back. We traveled down Route 5, (no Interstate 91 yet, of course) through Northampton, and Holyoke and into West Springfield. What a treat to watch all those spectacular street and home decorations passing by. I'm sure we were half frozen by the time we arrived, but we didn't seem to mind in the excitement of another Christmas celebration with more gifts.

When I think of the simple practices we took for granted that are now deemed dangerous and inappropriate, like live candles on the tree, Christmas carols and nativity scene in public school, and children riding in the back of a semi-open truck, I understand how simple life was, and perhaps foolhardy in many ways. But nostalgia paints a picture of good family times in a town where neighbors took care of each other, and cherished values were shared and passed on from generation to generation.

~ Lois Stetson Buchiane

## The Sounds of Silence



Do you notice the phenomenon today of people using ear-phones, portable DVD players, cell phones, etc.

Whatever happened to good old silence that gave us each time to think and meditate? It seems there are no moments when a body can have a chance to be alone with our thoughts. When you drive to work or go shopping, the world seems to

overwhelm you with its temptations and news scandals, to say nothing about the lewd and ludicrous settings on the air waves.

It is a rare moment when you can get away from the world's clamoring and just (in the words of the Scripture) "Be still and know that I am God." To sit on a rock or stump in the woods and think is a blessing that more of us should indulge ourselves in. There are three questions we have to figure out the answers to in this life, namely (1) Where did we come from? (2) Why are we here on this earth? and (3) Where are we going when we leave this magnificent Earth when we pass on?

There is no better time than the present to get alone and ponder the whys and wherefores of life. A few precious minutes by yourself can put life in good perspective as you get close to God and await new insights that you have never known before. I'm not thinking of pie-in-the-sky, lightning-bolt revelations, but an honest-to-goodness time to assess your present lot and seek divine guidance. There is something about being alone with your thoughts and the solitude of nature that charges your batteries and changes your moods and outlook on life.

I'm asking you to try it. When you are alone, turn off the radio, TV, DVD, and just think. Think about the beautiful creation we are living in, the wild turkeys that feed in edges of the fields, the graceful deer that you startled from its grazing, the newness of life every spring after a long Heath winter, the miracle of seeds spouting in the same kind of plant as the previous year, there flowers, grass, trees, and shrubs, the orderly pattern of life in creation and recreation as you watch baby chicks emerge from an egg and grow into young adult hens.

You will have these moments to remember when life starts to push and shove you into its hurry-up mode. You will not regret the time spent in the peace and quiet of silence.

Listen to the sounds of silence.

~ Doug Stetson



## From Pipestone to Pine Ridge Reservation

From May 17 to May 24 of 2005, twelve students from the University of Hartford, two friends from Minnesota, and I, traveled to some of the sacred sites central to the Lakota and Dakota (Sioux) Nations. The difference between Lakota and Dakota according to my native friends is the dialect that they speak.

We flew into Sioux Falls, South Dakota, picked up vans and headed east into Minnesota. Our first stop, a mere hour after we arrived, was a high plains area called Blue Mounds where the aboriginal people of this region gathered in centuries past during the summer for conferring, trading, racing, gambling, and securing future mates. It is also a place where buffalo were chased off a cliff to be slaughtered by those waiting below. We hiked the area and observed a herd of bison that are breeding stock for the return of these magnificent beasts to their native prairies. The next day we visited wintering sites that predate the Lakota and Dakota, and learned a great deal about the ecology of the region including the native grasses, herbs, and wildflowers. We spent an evening with a local veterinarian who has a sizable herd of bison that we were able to encounter close-up in a relatively secure manner.

The following day we traveled to the Pipestone Quarry where Catlanite is extracted for ritual purposes, especially as stock for the peace pipe that is central to the religious life of many indigenous nations of the Americas. We had long conversations with pipe makers, including Chuck Derby who has been central to the initiative to keep the quarry open to all indigenous people who come in peace. Chuck's efforts have been Promethean, including testifying before congressional committees. We studied the Minnesota Conflict or Uprising of 1862 and gathered vital information from Chuck's partner Gloria who is an expert in the history of this tragic war that resulted in the largest group hanging in U.S. history. This mass execution would have been larger without the intervention of President Lincoln, who insisted that differentiation be made between those who raped, pillaged, and killed civilians and those who fought militarily in defense of their people and their way of life. In spite of this attempt at justice, innocent Dakota men were hung.

The objective of this course was to learn about Dakota and Lakota culture, history, and philosophy from tribal elders and other highly informed native people, through books authored by them, and by means of direct interviews and oral histories. Central to this process was our visit to Pine Ridge Reservation, a homeland for many Lakota, where we stayed with Eli Tail and his extended family. Eli is from the Crazy Horse Clan and, according to legend, this greatest horse soldier in U.S. history was buried in an unmarked grave in the hills above Eli's compound. Here we learned a great deal of the history and culture of the region from my friend and his wife Caroline, who is a human rights activist. I have had the pleasure of working with them for many years. His entire clan warmly welcomed us, and indeed the students from the University of Hartford rose to the occasion. Multi-generational conversations ensued, including horseback

riding together with rich complex interchanges from early morning to late at night. We slept in tepees and ate traditional food. The Porcupine Singers, who are Eli's neighbors, provided music and gave dance lessons to the students.

During our stay on Pine Ridge, we visited a branch of the Oglala-Lakota College and heard a presentation from Phyllis Swift Hawk, a great-granddaughter of Sitting Bull. She shared an extensive personal history connected with her ancestors and the life of her people. Henry Red Cloud, a great-grandson of Chief Red Cloud, took us on a tour of projects sponsored by "Trees, Land and People," an environmental and sustainable development organization that works on energy and housing issues on the reservation. We met Henry's mother who is a daughter of one of three women who survived the killing fields of Wounded Knee.

All these histories and project descriptions were shared with us with genuine enthusiasm and a clear commitment to intercultural dialogue. My native friends were uniformly pleased that we came to learn from them, to experience the spaces and places essential to their history and identity. We were invited to speak on reservation radio, where the students introduced themselves and I had an opportunity to describe the purpose of our visit. Ferdinand Rodriguez, our hip-hop artist, concluded the broadcast with a rap poem, an example of one that he would write for every day of our travels.

We then traveled from Porcupine down to Wounded Knee where we thought, remembered, stood together in silence and shock near the mass grave, and wept together. From this site of one of the many massacres of largely women, children, and the elderly, a mere remnant of Big Foot's band, we drove down to Fort Robinson, which was a center for U.S. Cavalry including a troop of "Buffalo Soldiers." It was also the place of the Red Cloud Agency. We discussed the history of the "Indian Wars" and reflected deeply near the marker of the spot where Crazy Horse was stabbed in the back both literally and metaphorically. This fine war chief who evaded the U.S. Army for over two years finally agreed to turn himself in because his people were starving. He was promised food for his people and security for all who came with him. Within days, he was dead and his people were led away in chains. Among them was Eli Tail's great-grandfather, a young war chief who would not "touch the pen" and came to Pine Ridge as a prisoner of war. Eli showed us some of the earliest documents of Pine Ridge that referred to it as a prisoner of war camp. At Fort Robinson, we stayed in officers' quarters that dated back to 1870. From this Fort, we headed east to the Rosebud reservation. En route, we toured the "Museum of the Fur Trade" and carefully studied artifacts and documents from this form of economic and cultural relationship.

I was moved by the oral histories and other forms of expression that my native friends directly and eagerly conveyed to my students and my friends. They relished the invitation to educate us on their terms and in their locales. I was also elated with how sophisticated and respectful our students were in learning these tragic and complex histories. They formed relationships that will outlast, as Stephanie Berann said, "Chuck Derby, Eli Tail, Phyllis Swift Hawk, Henry Red Cloud, and den Ouden." They absorbed

*("From Pipestone to Pine Ridge" continued on page 5)*



### *Rays of Interest*

## **Winter at Chesterville (continued)**

By Ray Pettengill

*The following was written by my father on February 26, 1967.*

(The squally baby referred to was me !)

Before cutting those pine that were over 100 years old we had to bed them up good by felling small trees crosswise for them to fall onto to keep them out of the snow and soft ground. The ground in there didn't freeze as it would have on a higher elevation. Many of the pine were over a hundred feet tall and scaled from nine to eleven hundred board feet. The smallest of them was over four hundred, and the largest one over two thousand with a thousand feet in the butt log. That one was four feet in diameter on the stump and took Gramp and I quite a while to "chew" it off with a six-foot crosscut saw. We had the pulp all out and hauled to Dryden and birch all cut and delivered by the first of February. On the morning of February 2, 1931, with the temperature at -30, Dr. Trefethan of Wilton delivered to Minnie an eight-pound, boy, our first baby. He was pretty red and squally but we kept him just the same, and had a lot of fun with him that winter. He wasn't much worry then. We worried about him a lot later but as it turned out we didn't need to, but how were we to know that then.

By March 1 we had the pine cut and delivered to the mill and were ready to go back to Perkins Plantation. to break road up the brook from Gramps' house and haul out a hundred cord of peeled pulp. The snow was now five-feet deep in the woods and we had to shovel ahead of the horses the first trip through.

While in Chesterville, Gramp hired Bill Corbett of Wilton a couple of weeks to help cut birch and thank God it was for only two weeks, I never sawed with anyone on the other end of a crosscut saw that would drag both feet and his butt too. Bill went to bed one night at 6:00 p.m. and as Gramp and Gram and Minnie and I were sitting in the living room playing cards, downstairs came Bill and said, "Morning, Jim," went out in the kitchen, looked at the clock and saw it was only 8:00 p.m. then went back upstairs to bed. Bill was nervous that way but a hard worker and earned his money. One morning he went to the barn to harness the horses. Old "Chub," the near horse, didn't know Bill very well and was inclined to be "lite behind" by spells. He let drive with both feet as Bill was passing behind him. One foot on one side of Bills head and one on the other and left his shoe marks in the wall that you could see to this day if the stall is still standing. Old Bill went home the next Saturday night and didn't come back.

While Bill was working for Gramp he had a man by the name of Crockett cutting wood for him for his board and tobacco on the home place and staying with his mother. I went up to get Bill one Sunday afternoon. When we left, he said "Put plenty of water in that turnip soup you feed the hired man, Ma, he's a big eater."

We cut 50 pine trees that winter, and they scaled 32,000 board feet. They were the handsomest logs I ever saw, old pump-kin pine. We had very good luck that winter. I guess as good if not better than could be expected. One of the fellows helping me unload pick (toothpick) wood at Dixfield drove a birch hook through my finger but missed the joint so that healed all o.k. And we nearly lost a horse in one of those water holes. It had crusted over with ice about an inch thick and covered with snow and we were breaking a new road and it was on one side of our road. I came over it for the first time, and in went one horse but there was an eight-inch cedar tree across the hole and the horse had gotten his front feet across that tree before he went in. We unhooked the horses from the sled, hitched the other horse onto him, and pulled him out. That fallen cedar tree was all that saved him. When we got the horse out and put him in the barn with two blankets on I went back and measured the hole. It was ten feet across, and I cut a pole and ran it down into the water and mud thirteen feet and still couldn't touch bottom.

*("From Pipestone to Pine Ridge" continued from page 4)*

information, grasped rich meanings, embraced conceptual complexities, and grieved over this tragic dimension of our nation's experience. They engaged in the celebration of learning in a gentle posture of reflection, that turns knowledge into the possibility of wisdom. The four directions, the sun, and the moon blessed us with a week of 80-degree temperatures and soft sensuous breezes. Perhaps Nature and/or "the Great Spirit" respond to thoughtful inquiry and respectful conversations.

I cannot exaggerate how pleased my Lakota friends were that we would come to inquire, listen, and learn from them. The Lakota, like so many aboriginal people, survived state-sponsored genocide. They survived the U.S. Government's coercion, manipulation, and endless deception. Their language and culture have been the object of systematic destruction. They have been the targets of a policy the goal of which was to "kill the Indian and save the man." To meet them in humility and in truth is a modest mode of learning in which the study of histories, philosophies, and cultures can help us move to a more constructive and more humanly dignified future. It was an extraordinary experience for us all. We cannot change the past but, in honesty and shared reflection, we can create the possibility of a world rich with the prospects for liberty and justice for all. As Scott Gang said, "The trip was an eye-opening experience that allowed me to first use all my senses at once. The opportunity to smell and breathe in the fresh air, see the beautiful sights of the prairies/farms of Minnesota, see the natural landscapes such as the badlands and other areas, enjoy the wonderful company of my fellow students and the people we have met, and learn the knowledge we were exposed to firsthand, has left a permanent smile in my heart and in my soul. I feel more spiritually connected to the Earth and its people and I feel that I grew more in that eight-day period than any other period I have experienced my whole entire life."

*~ Bernard den Ouden*

## The Magic of Myrifield: Evolution of a Heath Landmark: II

As we began the restoration of Myrifield, we had occasion more than once to be glad that the previous owners, Dave and Pegge Howland, had cleared away the threatening underbrush and stabilized the house's structure. But there was still much to be done. The house had no operating central heating system. A gravity-feed water tank installed in the attic was in constant danger of freezing and bursting the water-supply pipes during the winter, an event that happened twice (before we removed the tank altogether) during the first winter of our reconstruction, because we were not as careful as Dave had been in checking up on the heating tapes installed to prevent this calamity. The cellar had severe moisture and drainage problems. Many of the sills were rotten and needed to be replaced. The ell had no foundation. Much of the framing carpentry in the house - all of which long predated the Howlands' ownership of the place - was eccentric.

From our experience with our first old house, however, we knew what we were getting into, and that problems of this kind were always to be expected in the restoration of a historic property. We were fortunate in gaining the expertise of a specialist restorer of eighteenth-century houses, Jerry Eide of Wendell, who has done quite a bit of work for the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, now Historic New England. His firm, Hill Town Restoration, was our general contractor. Our architect was Brian De Vriese of Heath, who drew up our plans and, along with Jerry, helped us to refine and develop our ideas during the early phases of the reconstruction.

We shared the Howlands' desire to maintain as much as possible of Myrifield's character, but we had to decide what we would do to ensure that the house would continue to stand as long as it had when we acquired it. Myrifield had undergone so many changes in the course of its life of more than two centuries that it was impossible to do an authentic 1790 restoration. In any case, we wanted to preserve Myrifield as a family residence, not a museum. We wanted to sustain the sense of Myrifield's life through its entire existence, not just its eighteenth-century history. Margaret had been the first curator/guide to live in the 1750 Porter-Phelps-Huntington house in Hadley more than 40 years ago, and its tradition of keeping and valuing family change over the centuries made a deep impression on her.

Myrifield is a paradigm example of the Northern New England architectural style described by Thomas C. Hubka in his 1984 study, *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farmsteads of New England*. In the nineteenth century, many farmers in this part of the world reconfigured their buildings to form one structure. It has been thought that the farmers did this in order to get as many of their chores done as possible in winter without having to go out in the snow and cold. But this style also increased the danger of fire sweeping through the structure. Hubka believes that the tradition of connecting farm buildings in the nineteenth century was for aesthetic reasons. In any case, for Myrifield, this configuration is original to the house, although the second stories of the entire structure evolved over time, as we and Jerry discovered in the course of Myrifield's reconstruction. These components are easy to see in the rooflines of Myrifield: the Big House, with the highest roof; the Little House immediately to its east, the Back House, with a somewhat higher roofline, and the barn.



It is not clear at what point additions and extensions were made to Myrifield, though these must have happened at different stages, since the clapboarding, according to Jerry, is of different woods and ages. One is tempted to suppose that many of these improvements must have been made by the Temples to accommodate their large family, and there is forensic evidence to show that the transformation of the original Cape into a two-story Federal structure occurred after 1850, when balloon-frame construction first came in, and before the end of the nineteenth century.

At some point, the roof was raised on the Big House to accommodate a second story, and the back was extended five feet to align the north wall with the side of the summer kitchen in the Little House, which had previously jutted out from the Big House (we found what had been the outside clapboarding on the Little House when we uncovered its wall to do our foundation work). Second stories were also built above the extension sheds. Jerry has found evidence that the extension roofs were raised twice, possibly to accommodate the south-facing, second-story verandah that runs the length of the extension.

According to Jerry, the English barn, also dating from the 1790s, was attached to the ell by sheds from the beginning, which meant that the original arrangement of the property was indeed that of a connected farmstead. English barns were constructed with the main carriage doors on the long sides of the barn, as is the case at Myrifield. Apparently, once the American barn was invented, sometime in the late 1790s, with the doors on the ends, English barns were no longer erected in New England. One interesting feature of our barn is the old pole beam with holes and pegs for the raising of wagons (and possibly the hanging of carcasses) still in its original place. At the Heath Fair this year we were again struck by the resemblance of our barn to the Solomon Temple barn on the fairgrounds; the Solomon Temple barn also appears to be constructed in the English style, and was built at about the same time.

("The Magic of Myrifield" continued on page 7)

(*"The Magic of Myrifiield"* continued from page 6)

Our restoration of Myrifiield took place in seven stages:

- Reconstruction of the Big House; reestablishment of the central chimney; digging out the cellar and repairing its walls; re-roofing the entire house and barn in yellow cedar shingle.
- Foundation work, including sills, crawl space, and access to the cellar from the Little House, and reinforcement of the second-floor verandah structure; reframing and reinforcing the west porch; rehabilitating and repairing windows and exterior clapboards; exterior painting.
- Installing a new oil-fired forced hot-water in-floor radiant central heating system; replumbing and rewiring the entire structure.
- Conversion and reconstruction of the Little House with ground-floor kitchen areas, including a butler's pantry and a larder; the cellar and second-floor stairwells and hallway; upstairs bathroom, and main bedroom.
- Conversion of the Back House: installation of a ground-floor laundry, half bath, mudroom, and utility areas including a concrete floor in the tractor shed; attic and second-floor stairwells; upstairs guest rooms, and bath.
- Renovation of the attic in the Back House.
- Barn sills and exterior resheathing.

When we bought Myrifiield, it was sided entirely in cedar shingles put on by Dr. Wolcott in the early twentieth century. We found her name stenciled on several shingles, along with the name of the mill in Vancouver, British Columbia, that manufactured them; that same mill, whose shingles Dr. Wolcott had installed on the exterior of Myrifiield sometime after 1903, manufactured the cedar shingles for our new roof a century later.

When Jerry took down a chimney on the west end of the Big House, we discovered clapboards under the shingles. It turned out that the clapboards extended front and back on both stories throughout the entire house and sheds, as far as the barn, which indicated that the second stories of both the main house and the ell were constructed at some point in the nineteenth century before Dr. Wolcott installed the shingles. The clapboards had been covered by tarpaper when the cedar shingles were installed; we were able to save and rehabilitate about 80% of them, and Jerry found a specialty mill for authentic replacements of the remainder. We also found the original window framing under the window frames installed by Dr. Wolcott.

As the reconstruction proceeded, our construction workers became part of our family as they walked into and through our lives. Several of them led other lives as musicians, and lunch hours occasionally became impromptu rock concerts. We discovered when we attended a concert in Shelburne Falls that one of our house painters was quite a talented jazz singer; she is now pursuing her musical - but, as far as we know, not her house-painting - career in Montreal. Our border collie puppy, Moss, befriended the workers immediately after his arrival from a dairy farm in northern Vermont. The workers threw tennis balls for Moss to fetch, and soon named him, with good

reason, Moss the Boss.

We made many forensic discoveries during the course of our reconstruction, among them the reason why the front parlor was so cold in the winter that the Howlands had blocked it off. Eight feet of cellar wall was missing from the west foundation, so that the only intervening structures between the outside frigid air and the interior of the parlor were the quarter-inch thick floorboards, through which the winter winds whistled! When we bought Myrifiield, leading up from the front door was a central flight of stairs, where the original central chimney had once stood. The major decision we had to make was to remove these stairs and take down two early twentieth-century chimneys, one in the dining room, one in the parlor, in order to reestablish the original central chimney in the main part of the house. This work entailed, along with the need to overhaul the cellar completely, gutting the entire structure of the Big House from the cellar to the rafters.

During the project's first year we were confined to the ell, spending many a wintry day huddled around its only reliable heat source, a pellet stove that we had providentially acquired when we realized that Myrifiield's existing arrangements for winter warmth - individual electric units in the rooms - would consume much of the money we had set aside to do the reconstruction.

As the reconstruction of the Big House proceeded, we were able to save the original doors, the parson's cabinet (which we moved from the parlor to our dining room, along with a mantel original to the house), and the interior window frames; we rehabilitated the windows; we kept pretty much the original floor plan. But the rest of the house had to be reconstructed more or less from scratch, with radiant in-floor heating under the wide-board pine floors that Jerry had milled for us at the Hall Tavern sawmill in East Charlemont. Almost every piece of wood in the house has been rehabilitated, reinforced, or replaced.

In the course of this work, Jerry discovered that because different construction methods had been used in the first and second floors of the Big House, the studs weren't aligned, and at several points the only cohesive force holding the house together was the nailwork in the sheathing boards! Jerry found us a trove of eighteenth-century bricks to recreate the chimney and also discovered the original foundation stones still lying in the cellar, so that our "new" chimney is built on the footprint of the original chimney on its original foundation stones, with four fireplaces, one each in the parlor and dining room, and one in each of our studies.

We were able to move into our studies and the rest of the Big House in March 2004. Margaret cooked with a toaster oven and a microwave in a temporary kitchen we set up in what is now the dining room. The focus of the work now shifted to the ell - the Little House and Back House.

(*"The Magic of Myrifiield"* continued on page 8)



("The Magic of Myrifiield" continued from page 7)

These structures had been built right on the ground with no foundations, which was still the case when we bought the property in 2002. Jerry removed the entire first-floor north wall of the ell, jacked up the structure, and excavated six feet below grade level to create proper foundations, drainage, and a 4-1/2-foot crawl space under the extension, replacing the north sills along the way. The extensive foundation work also enabled us to have a concrete slab foundation poured to support the 3,600-pound Aga stove that was installed in our new kitchen.

Our third winter under construction arrived, and as we finally gained access, first to our new kitchen in March 2005 and then to the remainder of the Little House and the Back House with the passage of spring and summer, we began to see light at the end of the tunnel, although occasionally it appeared to be the headlight of an oncoming train. The reconstruction project seemed endless while we were going through it, but as the last details neared completion we realized that not even three years had passed since we began poring over the blueprints with Jerry and Brian. The air of Myrifiield no longer resounded with the blows of hammers, the whining of table saws, and the rat-a-tat-tat of nail guns. The workers had gone, and Myrifiield, new and old, was finally ours once more. From time to time we felt lonely, and Moss moped at the diminution of his flock. But we have all recovered.

So much for Myrifiield's past and present; what of its future? Well, as the great twentieth-century thinker Ray Charles used to say, "One never do know, do one?" Myrifiield and we had our 15 minutes of fame on November 13 and 14. "If These Walls Could Talk" on Homes & Garden cable channel (HGTV, Channel 229) was devoted to Dr. Wolcott's Myrifiield. Actually it was less than 15 minutes of fame - the crew filmed all day for what was a five-minute segment.

We still need to do some landscaping, especially for the exits and entrances to the various doors into Myrifiield. We hope to be able to screen in the west porch so we can sit out on warm Heath summer evenings without attracting attention from the myriad myriads of mosquitoes at Myrifiield. We'd like to restore the tennis court that Dave Howland painstakingly created and maintained in the southeast corner of the front meadows. We're taking the first steps toward establishing MICA, the Myrifiield Institute for Cognition and the Arts, a center for research in cognitive poetics and the arts more generally. We will entertain our grandchildren, the first of whom, Emmi, has already staked out her turf in the Back House. We will try to grow old gracefully, in the house about which, when we first saw it, we might well have quoted that native of Whitingham, Vermont, the Mormon pioneer Brigham Young: "This is the place." It was, and it is.

On the back of a picture of Myrifiield dated 1912 that Anna Foster gave to the Heath Historical Society appears a poem we think must have been inscribed if not composed by Dr. Wolcott herself (we would like to find some of her handwriting to compare). It fittingly epitomizes what Myrifiield has come to mean for us:



I dwelt within a city of the rich,  
And strove to share its affluence and life:  
The fruits I plucked were bitterness and strife.

I moved me to a hamlet of the wise,  
And felt how good is morning after night;  
For there I found contentment and delight.

—Myrifiield 1912

~ Donald C. and Margaret H. Freeman

## Snowbound 2005

"The snow had begun in the gloaming and busily all night."  
(from *The First Snow Fall* by James Russell

Lowell)

Not so - the snow started at noontime and continued into the night.

An early winter's storm but we had warning; the computer had predicted it right.

A feeling of tranquility swept over me, let the brown fields glow clean and white.

I wish to sit by the fireside, to read, to enjoy a stormy night.

But no - the plow had already come roaring to push the snow out to the banks.

And I know someone will continue the work, keeping the roads open, with few thanks.

I just won't allow this age of progress to rob me of this one peaceful night,

To be snowbound, in my chair, with my book - for in my mind -  
It's my God-Given Right!

~ Ruth Johnson





## FREE TASTINGS



**FREE TOURS LATE MAY - DECEMBER**

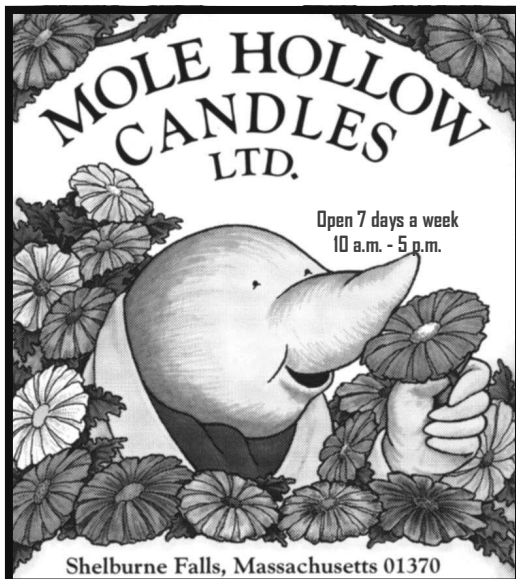


**1000 Mohawk Trail  
Shelburne, Massachusetts 01370  
Tel. 413-625-6527**



**337-5716**

**Charlemont • 339-4915**

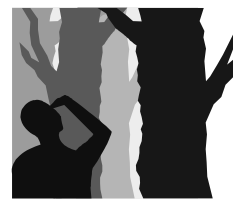


413-773-1818 / fax 773-1881



## ***Wild Ramblings***

# **Of Bedrock and Oaks**



By Bill Lattrell

Not too far off of the southern most extent of our land, on the property of Rocky and Marilyn Lively, stands a most impressive tree. This giant red oak tree grows on a high south-facing ledge. The tree is somewhere between 5 and 6 feet in diameter, and more than 100-feet wide from the branch tip on one side to the branch tip on the other side, and about 100-feet tall. It has branches that are 3 feet in diameter. By evidence of the acres and acres of oak trees that surround this tree, it has been a major force on the landscape. Nearby there are many three to 4-foot diameter trees. Within 4 to 500 feet there are numerous 2 to 3-foot diameter red oak trees, and for a distance of more than a quarter mile red oaks from saplings to 2 feet in diameter dominate the landscape.

What is most impressive is not the huge size of the tree, but rather the location of this tree on the landscape.. This red oak is growing in an area that only contains a thin layer of soil about 6-12-inches thick. Underneath the soil there are hundreds of feet of bedrock, schist bedrock, to be more specific. This tree, which must weigh scores of tons, appears to be teetering on top of the bedrock outcrop. I have spent many a moment, standing in the shadow of this monument, trying to answer these questions.

To a fancier of trees like me this is no small accomplishment. First, there is the issue of ballast. How does such a gigantic tree grow with no soil into which it can anchor its roots? Typically we expect a tree to have nearly the same size of root mass as branch mass. With so little soil where does this root mass grow? Second, where does this tree, which must use hundreds of gallons of water a day during the growing season, get its water? Usually the fine root hairs on the root structure absorb groundwater from the soil. Finally, what about nutrients? Large trees require significant quantities of nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium. In most cases, trees get most of these nutrients from the soil. Again, with so little soil how does this tree get the vital nutrients required for growth and survival?

The ballast question is most interesting. First, it is necessary to recognize that oak trees grow slowly, and when they are growing on bedrock they grow very slowly. To digress for a moment, this 5 to 6-foot diameter red oak could be 400 years old. To put that in perspective, the acorn that produced this mighty oak was possibly germinating somewhere around the year 1600. That is 20 years prior to the pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock, 150 years prior to the French and Indian War, 176 years prior to the signing of the Declaration of Independence, 260 years before the Civil War, and 369 years prior to the first human walking on the moon. Over this long period of time the roots to this red oak tree have been growing into the plates of the schist bedrock. How is this possible? All of the plates in the bedrock in our area are tilted upward at an angle of roughly 45 degrees. This is the result of massive force caused by the colliding of continents millions of years ago. The tilted plates allowed water to enter the space between the plates. It froze in the winter and the frozen ice expanded the space between the plates. These spaces between the plated bedrock provided a place for the roots to grow. Over years, and years, and years, the roots wound their way through various passage ways in the bedrock. As the roots grew in size they filled the bedrock pores, producing huge amounts of friction and force, anchoring the tree to the bedrock mass as if it were cemented in place.

This tree is also growing downwind of a steep northern slope. It is protected from the winds, particularly during large ice storms that otherwise could damage the tree. Century after century this tree has weathered the worst that our climate could offer, and that is no small accomplishment.

The answer to the water question is also related to the tilted bedrock plates.. A 12-inch sugar maple can use 500 gallons of water a day during the peak of the growing season, I shudder to think what the water requirements are for a 5-6-foot diameter red oak. Nevertheless, this tree, having survived hundreds of years, is having no problem filling its water requirements. This well-plated schist bedrock extends over the entire dome of the mountain that lies to the north of the up-gradient of the tree. Precipitation migrates through the soil and quickly into the space between the bedrock plates. This type of bedrock is well known for water storage. In fact, I have an artesian well placed in this same bedrock that for the last twenty years has poured out over 18,000 gallons of water a day out the top of the well. This large oak has relied on this same type of plentiful water source for 400 years.

Nutrients? Same answer. There are acres and acres of soil that sit on the bedrock dome. The nutrients in the soil leach into the fractures in the bedrock and get carried by rainwater into the stored water in the bedrock. The roots of the oak intercept this water and extract the nutrients to feed the large oak towering on the bedrock above.

Another significant piece to the puzzle that explains this tree's remarkable survival is its aspect. This stately tree sits on a wide ledge and faces south, below the top of the dome to the north. The sun warms the huge mass of bedrock, creating a microclimate of slightly increased temperature. The tree will leaf out earlier in the spring and stay active longer into the autumn, giving it a longer growing season. A longer growing season allows more time for the leaves to photosynthesize, producing much needed sugars that will be stored in the roots during the winter. This warm microclimate also keeps the tree warmer in the winter which is less stressful on the tree.

Despite the facts that solve the riddle of how this tree could so handily survive what appears to be a hostile environment, I am still in awe every time I find myself in the presence of this great oak. It has lived a long and useful life and has many, many years to live on. Standing next to this tree I often find myself feeling very small, even weak. I am inspired by its strength, beauty, and longevity. The tree seems to have a determination that I have a hard time defining. I find myself wondering what it would say if it could only speak to me. And then it occurs to me that maybe, just maybe, it has.



## Green Thoughts

### Winter Interest Plants

By Pat Leuchtman

There is a huge gray birch in our pasture south of the house which I admire every single day. It is beautiful in all seasons. I love to watch it leaf out in tender green in May and watch the color deepen, then change to gold in the fall. Even in winter it is beautiful, encased in sparkling ice. Winter storms make it sing when the wind turns the whole tree into a chime as the ice cracks.

Watching that tree over the past quarter century has reminded me that it is important to consider the elements that some plants will bring to the winter garden. We can consider interesting bark, or a sculptural shape when the foliage is gone, or fruits to delight the eye or the birds that will add interest to the winter garden. You might not get everything in a single plant, but there are a number of plants that have special interest in the winter, as well as in other seasons.

In our region we are familiar with the obvious glories of the sugar maple. The maple family is a large one and the paper-bark maple, *Acer griseum* is considered one of the most beautiful small trees. It does have good red fall color in the northeast but it is the color and shagginess of its reddish-brown exfoliating bark that is stunning in the snowy landscape. This is a small tree with an oval outline that grows to a little more than 20 feet high and wide. It needs good drainage but tolerates acid soil.

*Betula pendula Youngii* is a small, weeping, white-barked birch that will reach a height and width of about 15 feet. It is adaptable to dry or moist soils and is hardy to zone 3. I added this tree to The Lawn Grove, which is set in our front lawn. The nursery sent a much smaller tree than I expected, but four years later it droops gracefully at chin height. Last year I was able to admire its sculptural shape, as petite as it was.

Flowering crabapples are a delightful sight in the spring and there are dozens of cultivars. Sugar Tyme is a good size for a small garden, reaching a height of about 18 feet with a 15-foot spread. It is highly disease-resistant and has pale pink buds that open to white flowers. Its benefit to the winter garden is that it holds its little red crabapples well through the winter. They are decorative and provide food for wintering birds.

We are all familiar with the holly that abounds at Christmas with its shiny dark green pointed leaves and beautiful red berries. But that is just one type of *Ilex*. There are also deciduous varieties that provide decorative red berries. Like the more familiar holly, male and female plants are required for pollination and berry production. *Ilex verticillata* is known as the common winterberry and is hardy to zone 3. It has shown up more and more in decorative wreaths and arrangements for the holidays. Winterberry shrubs have a fairly compact habit with a dense arrangement of fine twiggy branches. The foliage is dark green and fall foliage can be tinged with yellow or purple. The fruits are bright red and last until January. Winter Red, which grows to about 9-feet- tall and nearly

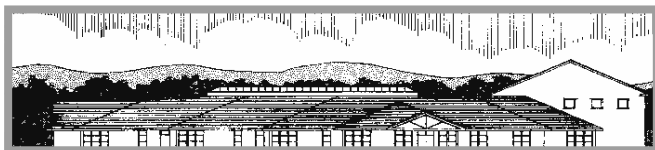
as wide, is considered the best cultivar for producing a high quality and quantity of berries. Red Sprite is much smaller growing only about 3-feet-tall and 5-feet-wide. Winterberry requires full sun, ordinarily fertile, well- drained soil.

Many years ago I was given what was called a highbush cranberry. It has thrived. In spring I love the flat creamy flowers that to me, resemble lacecap hydrangea flowers, and in the fall I love the jewel-like red berries that attract the birds. The American cranberrybush or *Viburnum trilobum* grows to about 10 or 12-feet-tall and provides a graceful screen. I suspect my highbush cranberry is a species with good hybrids you can order through a nursery. The cultivar Wentworth is extremely hardy, grows to 10 feet and has attractive red fall color as well as beautiful red berries, while Bailey's compactum grows only 5 to 6-feet-tall and as wide.

Of course, there are other elements in our gardens and yards that please our eye in winter. There is the way the snow mounds on a garden bench or on the seed heads of grasses. We have a metal (of undetermined variety) figure of Shiva standing on the stone foundation surrounding the Sunken Garden. He gazes and guards and reminds me of the way that gardens and plants enlarge our world bringing us to an appreciation of other landscapes and cultures. The sundial, in summer surrounded by lilies, stands alone and measures the short, cold hours of the winter day.

Our gardens do not disappear in the winter; they are transformed by snow and ice. As we gaze past the frost flowers on our windows, the winter garden is serene. No chores beckon. This is our time to admire nature's brilliance.



**Heath School News**

By Susan Todd

The Friday before Columbus Day we were supposed to take our annual All School Hike to Fort Shirley. The weather forecast was a little "iffy" so we decided to postpone. As it was, we could have made the trek with only a few sprinkles. What we did instead, though not walking about in the autumn woods, was nonetheless magical. Thanks to Pegge Howland, curator of the Heath Historical Society's Museums, Jack Cable, the Society's president, and Bill Thane, we were able to bring the model of Fort Shirley that Bill had constructed many years ago to the children for a daylong visit. During All School the model was presented to the school. Ms Gary's Third and Fourth Graders shared what they had learned about the history of Fort Shirley and then Jack and Bill contributed their knowledge.

Throughout the day Bill held court as groups of children came out into the Open Space and observed the model and asked many questions. Some drew sketches of what they observed, while others constructed their own versions of the model with blocks and tiles. It was a great day of learning. Words such as barracks, block house, parade ground, and perimeter were freely used. Gradually individual classes are visiting Fort Shirley, and we will schedule a hike in the spring. Ms. Gary's class is taking on an important service project by measuring the broken pickets from the fence surrounding Anna Norton's grave there. (Anna was the little girl who died at Fort Shirley when she was seven). The class will replace them and then paint the entire fence by spring.

In our effort to more fully understand the history of Heath, the school seeks to uncover more information about General William Heath, for whom the town is named. I have been listening to the CD of *1776* by David McCullough, which has many references to General Heath. We hope to celebrate his memory on March 2, 2006, the anniversary of his birth (old style). If anyone could come forward with more information, we would be most grateful.

On December 1, the Friends of the Heath School Library held their annual amazing Book Fair. From 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. that day Megan Lambert, Outreach Coordinator from the Eric Carle Museum, spoke to parents and grandparents at the school about "What is Visual Literacy and Why Is It So Important?" We called it a Tea with Megan Lambert, with refreshments and babysitting. This was a great opportunity to hear a gifted educator speak about the power of picture book art in awakening visual skills in children.

**Heath School Parent-Teacher Partnership News**

It has been a very long and productive fall for the PTP. Our Halloween Party - held at the school this year on a beautiful, warm day - featured a haunted hike through the north woods and a delightful costume parade with many students and families in attendance. In addition to Halloween revelry, students collected contributions for UNICEF again this year. UNICEF has said that 50% of all donations will be directed to children who suffered through Hurricane Katrina.

The PTP will continue to sponsor our monthly Family Movie Nights at the school, held on the third Friday of the month at 7:00 p.m. We welcome community members to join us.

Mark your calendars now for the Enchanted Circle Theatre Group performing "Folktales from Japan." This is a high-energy, professional theatre company that provides educational and exciting theatre events. They are scheduled for Monday, December 12, at 9:30 a.m. Please join us!

Finally, the PTP continues to collect "Box Tops for Education" through the General Mills program. Many food products carry a small coupon on their box tops that we can redeem for 10¢ each. These box tops can really add up. There is a jar in the front entrance to the school for their collection. Thank you!

~ PTP Officers  
*Dawn Holden*, Co-chair  
*Dana Blackburn*, Co-chair  
*Robin Jenkins*, Treasurer  
*Valerie Lively*, Secretary

**Helping Hurricane Katrina Victims**

The whole Heath School community came together to make school bags filled with donated school supplies for children affected by Hurricane Katrina.

During the month of September, the school supplies were donated and the first graders were in charge of tracking donations. With the help of Ms. O'Brien, bar graphs were made to keep track of the supplies. The kinds of school supplies we gathered were erasers, pencils, pencil sharpeners, crayons, paper, and scissors. When enough were gathered, the fifth and sixth graders sewed twenty-seven school bags using bright and colorful fabric.

We will be sending the school bags through the Church World Service so they can deliver them to children affected by Hurricane Katrina.

It made all of us at the Heath Elementary School and the town's community feel better knowing we have helped others in need.

~ *Joshua Rode*  
 Fourth Grade student



## Heathans Abroad – Part II, France

One true test of a fine vacation is when you don't want to come home. The final morning, over *café crème* and croissants in the little café one block from our hotel in Paris, we knew we didn't want to leave this glorious city quite yet.

We, of course, did the things all good tourists do. We climbed all 284 steps to the top of *L'Arc de Triomphe* and went up the Eiffel Tower at night to see all of Paris magically spread out before us. We viewed the impressionists at the Musée D'Orsay, strolled along the banks of the Seine, and ate oysters in outdoor cafes. Dinners in little restaurants were sublime, from the wild duck at Clos des Gourmets, to the sole and foie gras at Port d'Alma, to the steak tartare and filet mignon at the Café d'Alma. How could anyone want to leave a city with all that lovely food still there waiting to be eaten?

Paris, however, was a small addendum to our main agenda in France which was barging in Burgundy along the Nivernais river and its canal system. Our week aboard *La Belle Epoque* with ten other passengers was one of walking, touring, socializing, and, yes, eating. We all walked four to five miles each day through the countryside and little villages, through fields of canola, sunflowers, and, of course, acre upon acre of vineyards. The grapes had been harvested already except for a few left to concentrate their sweetness for dessert wines. Roses grew at the ends of rows, and like the canary in the mine, would get the first signs of blight, warning of the necessity to spray the vines with sulphur. The walks took us through quiet little towns with their picturesque churches, stone houses, colorful window boxes, and fancy lace curtains. We would stop in the local café for a coffee break where the local folk might be doing the same, playing dice over a barrel, or coming in to get their daily baguette for dinner. Other days we walked on the towpath along the canal watching our own barge fit through the small locks with a bare two inches to spare on either side.

The walks were lovely, and in addition each day included visits to other places: a 14<sup>th</sup> century chateau, a hillside town with an exquisite Romanesque/ Gothic basilica, or a wine cave complete with thick mold on the bottles and a dank winy smell. This last included a wine tasting where any wine you didn't want could be spit out or poured on the gravel floor, and we did, with abandon. Hence, that winy smell.

Back on board passengers were cosseted in every way. Both lunch and dinner featured a white and a red wine, different ones each time and all lovely. Each dinner offered two new and tasty cheeses. Charles de Gaulle said once that it was impossible to rule a country that produces 300 cheeses. Well, we only got through twenty of them in our eleven days. Both dinners and lunches were multi-course and included typical French regional specialties, such as boeuf bourguignon, coq au vin, and cassoulet. Dinner concluded with exquisite desserts, and Grand Marnier soufflé was a favorite. A foie gras tasting was a special treat! At the end of all this we felt rather like the geese who are force-fed through tubes to produce that very foie gras we love.

The culminating fillip to our little French excursion was hot air ballooning over Isle de France, or as they call it in France, *un voy-*

*age Montgolfiere*. We rose gently from a field next to a small 14<sup>th</sup> century manor house surrounded by a moat. We skimmed over the tops of trees, then descended to hover over plowed fields. We floated over tiny towns, copses of trees, and solitary farmhouses. People waved at us from the ground, and a small plane circled us. The balloon is obviously a threat to local fauna. A rabbit caught out in the open raced across several fields for cover. Sheep and horses raced around in circles, and at least one cat tore across a yard and into a house. We landed gently in a field far from where we began. The whole experience was sublime.

We'll definitely go back to France! Every French person with whom we spoke was extremely nice to us, contrary to what one hears. It's a beautiful country, and we loved it all. And I know that before too long we'll get rid of that extra five pounds we brought back.

~ Dianne Grinnell



## Police Department

As everyone is probably aware, there has been a lot more police presence in town. Officer Lee Lively has joined our department along with Officer Chris Lannon. I am sure they will provide our town the enforcement and protection we expect from our police department.



Officer Lee Lively

There has been a longtime problem with speeding in the center of town and by Peter's Store. Not stopping at stop signs has also been an issue. These speed limits and stop signs are there for a reason. These speed limits and stop signs are **not** there to inconvenience you; they are there for your safety.

With winter come snow and the narrowing of the roads. Please slow down and allow for the less-than-perfect conditions we know come every year. Just because a speed limit is 40 MPH, it is in effect only if it is reasonable and proper for the current conditions and public safety.

If you need to reach the police department please do not call me or our officers at home. For emergency, as always, call **911**. For other police matters please call Shelburne Control at **625-8200**. This provides for a record of your call. Shelburne Control will be sure to reach me or another officer.

The Heath Police Department wants to keep an open-door policy. I have office hours on Tuesday night from 6:30 to 8:30, but if you are unable to come at that time, arrangements can be made for a time that works.

**Happy Holidays and Stay Safe.**

~ Chief Margo Newton



## What City Slickers Don't Know

I just returned from a week with my best friend Julie and her husband Serge, right in the heart of New York City. It was great fun, full of adventure, laughter, a show here and a museum there, great food, late hours, being spoiled rotten by my friends who are so dear they've become family, and being just plain exhausted. They are such night owls! I tell Julie and Serge that each day I spend with them is worth one time zone in jet lag. Serge's son, a NYC cop who does late shifts all the time, calls them "The Bats" for their even later hours.

I am counting on my friends in Heath not to quote me on the stuff that follows.

After my Big Apple week, I desperately needed to be in Heath to detox, and not just from the quantities of wine and way-too-late hours, but also from the rich rush of it all. As I woke up this morning in our lean, chilly hills, I stayed in bed to catch that extra quiet hour the time change gave us. I got to thinking about the differences in my friends' life in NYC and mine here in beloved Heath.

First off, they don't have stars. In my opinion, that's enough right there. Serge is from Haiti, so he knows the dazzle of a sky splashed with starlight. I don't think Julie knows that stars exist except in reference books, and they interest her less; but I know I would starve without stars. Imagine a winter night without the Milky Way, or lacking Orion striding quietly, grandly through the heavens!

When they come to visit me on their annual summer jaunt to Heath, Serge says my place reminds him of Haiti, which I take as a compliment. In addition to the canopy of stars, I don't have plumbing, electricity, phone, and all those other intrusions into the peaceful life. In Haiti, that's poverty - No, it's reality for the middle class. Serge also likes Sheila's goats that chomp the grass and weeds around the Dell, and he makes sly, funny remarks about how much better goat stew tastes than goat cheese. To be perfectly honest, I think Sheila's cheese and Serge's stew are tied for first.

I hasten to add that his stew is not from her goats, but from goat meat he gets in the NYC market where the infamous Hell's Kitchen used to be. Pretty soon, you can be sure those meat markets will be elbowed aside for yet more luxury apartments, and the city will have lost another slice of its diversity and uniqueness. In fifty years, the area will be just rich people's housing I think, with coffee and toilet paper and dog chow brought in from some outlying place like the hills of New Jersey or Pennsylvania, maybe Mars...or even Heath!

So what's the bottom line, as they say in New York? Here's my take: they don't know stars, silence, spring water, woodstoves, coyote howls, the brush of deer at night in fallen leaves, snow whispering as flake nicks flake, the hoot of a train down the valley, the universe ticking as it spins over our sleep. They come up poor, cheated of real life amidst all the city's riches. Worst of all, they don't know it.

~Kathy Stein

## Finance Committee Report

"Where we are...."

Since our last report in the August /September issue of the *Heath Herald*, the Finance Committee has met a half a dozen times to discuss issues and keep informed on matters with financial implications important to the Town.

Special decisions have been made with regard to requests to use the FinCom's Reserve Fund of \$5,000 for unforeseen budget adjustments. To date \$650 has been provided to the Town Accountant for closing-of-the-books training and a small software bill, \$100 for the Treasurer, and \$500 for the Senior Center.

As of September 30, the end of the first quarter, 28% of the budget for FY06 has been expended, which is reasonable for this time of the fiscal year. The Highway Department may have to plan for additional (modest) funding for snow plowing due to lack of personnel coverage, but this can be addressed at a Special Town Meeting.

The financing of the Three-Town Dump has focused on obtaining funding from the State. Bills were submitted to the House and Senate for \$1,000,000 for the three towns. As of this report the House approved their bill, but the Senate's got sidetracked in the process. However, a joint conference committee is expected to consider both bills in early December. Then it has to go to Governor Romney in January. The original bid by the E.T. & L. Corporation was for \$1,179,200: Heath's share is 26% or \$306,592. Progress in closing the dump was great until the nasty rains of October. Substantial damage was done and since repaired, but we don't know at this moment the final cost of the closing. A request has been submitted to FEMA for flood damage money. Flood damage was incurred also on several roads in Heath and for that a separate request was submitted to FEMA. The funding issue of the Dump affects the issuance of tax bills for FY06, which are supposed to go out by December 31. Otherwise, only one tax bill can be issued next spring. State law! So, this subject has got to be addressed soon.

The "Mohawk 2010" project that addresses the declining rate of student enrollment of 25% over the last five years and possibly less funding from the State is a very complex and unique undertaking. Bob Gruen of the School Committee, Tom Lively, Ned Wolf, Hazel Porter, Eric Grinnell, and Dave Howland from Heath have been serving as volunteers on one or more of three teams: Budget Review, which includes comparing the customary proposal(s) for FY07 with possible changes in the District's structure plus measures to streamline operations; Business Development, which explores alternative use of facilities; Contingency Planning, which is considering a range of consolidation options. It is hoped that recommendations, which will be reviewed in early December can be incorporated into a draft budget by early January. Won't be easy.

Lastly, on November 15 the Selectboard called for a meeting of all town committees and boards at the Charlemont Inn. Most committees attended and reported on their activities and goals. The FinCom expressed concern about (1) the upward spiral of

("Finance Committee Report" continued on page 15)

## Selectboard's Report

The Selectboard meets every other Tuesday night at 7:00 p.m. in Sawyer Hall.

**All Boards Meeting** - An all boards and committees meeting was held on November 15 at the Charlemont Inn. The purpose of the meeting was to familiarize all present with activities and goals being carried out or considered by each group and to allow for discussion among boards/committees and the Selectboard. The requirements of the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law were reviewed for the benefit of all, and the Open Space and Recreation Plan's five-year action plan was reviewed with the boards/committees that have tasks to complete to meet the stated goals. Progress has been made in many areas of the plan. The Selectboard expressed appreciation for all the good work that the board/committee volunteers do to keep the town running. This meeting is intended to be an annual event to enhance communication between all town departments. Meeting minutes are available for anyone who was unable to attend.

**Traffic Study** - The Police Department has coordinated a traffic study with the FRCOG to help us determine what signage, traffic control measures, and speed monitoring may need to be done throughout the Town.

**Camper/Trailer Bylaw and Regulations** - The Town has received notice from the State that the Camper/Trailer Bylaw was not properly posted. Due to a complaint filed with the Attorney General, the Bylaw will need to be re-voted on at another town meeting. Furthermore, it has been brought to the attention of the Selectboard that the Board of Health regulation requiring inspections and occupancy permits for campers/trailers was not properly published at the time it was adopted. The BOH has since advertised the regulation and it is now in compliance with the law. It was decided that all fees collected for occupancy permits will be returned, and the permit and inspection process will resume in the spring after another notice is sent out to all property owners.

**Three-Town Landfill** - At the beginning of October the capping of the former landfill site was nearly complete. Heavy rains began the second week of October with over 11 inches of rain falling during one 24-hour period. Substantial damage occurred resulting in the loss of about 20% of the topsoil and drainage layer covering the elastomeric membrane layer. The Heath, Hawley, and Charlemont Selectboards met with the engineers and the contractor at the site to review the damage and to learn what measures have to be taken to minimize it. The contractor assured the three Boards that the repair work would not exceed the original estimate for the complete project. The proposed repair work was approved at the site by a vote of the three Selectboards. The State House of Representatives passed a supplemental budget that included money for the landfill capping in Heath. The Senate failed to include the appropriation in their version of the bill and rejected an amendment by Senator Andrea Nuciforo. The matter will be taken up in conference committee negotiations after the legislature reconvenes in January.

**Heath On-line** - Take some time to visit the Town's Web site at the [www.townofheath.org](http://www.townofheath.org). You'll find Selectboard meeting minutes, school information, and much more. The Web site is a work in progress. Thanks to the computer committee for

getting this project up and running. You may contact the Board at [BOS@townofheath.org](mailto:BOS@townofheath.org). Send messages to any board or individual via the e-mail address, or visit the Heath Web site.

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

### Heath Selectboard Winter Meeting Schedule

Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. in Sawyer Hall  
December 20, 2005  
January 3, 17, 31, 2006

(*"Finance Committee Report"* continued from page 14)

property taxes due to increased operating budgets for Mohawk and Franklin County Technical Schools, which represent nearly 80% of the increase in Heath's tax levy over the last three years, (2) un-funded State mandates such as closing the Dump and built-in education programs such as Special Education and bus-ing and (3) the lack of an economic plan for Heath for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We also recommended reaching out to residents of Mohawk Estates in the interest of improving relations and resolving misunderstandings.

Please watch for notices and reports about "Mohawk 2010." Your awareness of its proposals is very important to our future.

~ Dave Howland, Chair  
Budge Litchfield  
Jeff Simmons  
Doug Stetson  
Ned Wolf



## Our Thanks

The members of the *Heath Herald* Staff on behalf of the paper and its readers want to take this opportunity to thank our Town Nurse **Joanne Fortune, R.N.** for her many years' worth of interesting and helpful columns. As she said in her last one, she feels it is time to turn over the task to a new voice or voices.

For this issue and, we hope, succeeding ones, Selectperson Sheila Litchfield, in her capacity as a certified occupational health nurse, has written a column under the heading "It's Your Health and Safety." See page 21.

# Support Heath Agriculture

## The Heath Agricultural Society - A Team For All Seasons

If you think that the Heath Agricultural Society only meets during the summer months, you should come to one of our meetings. We meet monthly throughout the year.

**WHAT** do we do at monthly meetings? There are numerous issues requiring attention. Most obviously, there is long-range planning for the upcoming fair. Performers need to be scheduled months in advance, so the entertainment committee scouts out individuals and groups that may be appealing to fairgoers. Planning for maintenance and improvement of the fairgrounds is another ongoing task. We often take time at fair meetings to explore ways to improve the fair and increase attendance. In addition to sponsoring the annual Heath Fair, the Agricultural Society also oversees other uses of the fairgrounds, renting winter storage space, renting the property to organizations, renting the property to families for reunions, weddings etc., preparing a skating rink for use in the winter.

**WHO** can attend Agricultural Society meetings? Anyone who wants to participate in the process of organizing a fun-filled, family-oriented fair.

**WHERE** do we meet? During warmer weather we meet at the fairgrounds; during colder weather we meet at the Heath School.

**WHEN** do we meet? 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month. Most meetings only last an hour. (We usually have some tasty snack available.)

**WHY** should you consider joining this team? Do you enjoy the fair every year? Perhaps it is time to go beyond being a mere "consumer," and start being one of the fair's "producers." We need more folks on the team to continue producing successful fairs. Joining the Agricultural Society means you can take an active part in making thousands of people really happy. You will also gain a wonderful feeling of pride and accomplishment knowing you are part of this traditional rural event.

**HOW** can you join? Just show up at any meeting. There are no dues!

We are eager to welcome new members. Having been a member of the Agricultural Society for over ten years, I know that it can be very enjoyable to work with neighbors in promoting the Heath Fair.

**Please join us.**

*~ Christine O'Brien*

## Are Your Animals Healthy?

A few years ago I was appointed to the position of Livestock Inspector for Heath. Until recently, the most difficult part of the job was trying to find out who in town had livestock and trying to meet with these people to fulfill the "headcount" paperwork required by the state.

In the past year or so, a new and growing problem has appeared. This problem is a real threat to all of our livestock, our pets, our wild animals, and our families. This threat is rabies. Recently Heath has had more than half a dozen cases of dogs and cats having had contact with rabid or suspected rabid wild animals. One local family even had to undergo the rabies shots themselves.

At a recent meeting of local livestock inspectors at the NRCS office in Amherst, we were told that all raccoons, skunks, and bats are to be treated as suspected rabid. Other than the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket as well as the tip of Cape Cod, every county of Massachusetts has had confirmed cases of rabies.

I don't intend to create panic, but I do want to strongly advise everyone to vaccinate pets and livestock against rabies. If your animal is in contact with a suspected rabid animal, get your veterinarian to give it a rabies booster shot as soon as possible. If you or anyone in your family is exposed to a rabid animal, its saliva or other body fluids, consult a physician immediately. There is a vaccine available to treat people who have been exposed. Administered in a timely manner, the vaccine prevents the development of the disease. There is no cure for rabies. Untreated rabies victims die. Talk to your friends, relatives, and neighbors. Are their animals current with rabies vaccinations?

Moving to a different issue, on October 29 I attended a USDA-sponsored meeting in Brandon, VT, which addressed the issue of livestock identification. By 2008 the USDA plans to have in place a national standard for livestock identification. This system will provide a means to track an animal from its birth to the day it enters the food processing facilities. Once this system is implemented, animals without identification will not be allowed off their home farm. No legitimate trucker will move them, no auction house will take them, and no processing facility will allow them on the premises. At present, the identification system seems a daunting project, but should be relatively simple to maintain once implemented. As more information becomes available on this subject I will make it known as best I can.

*~David Freeman*

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





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## The Way it was in the Country

I grew up on a small farm in the west part of Colrain, Adamsville to be exact, the next youngest of four sons to Mr. and Mrs. Edward Stowe. I grew to enjoy the diversified type of farming that we conducted. At one time our farm raised a lot of apples. I've stood on an apple-picking ladder with both basket and picking bag.

We were taught very early in life that hard work was to be enjoyed and a lot of our hard day's work was truly enjoyed. Some kinds of work were rather tedious. I will never admit to liking to pick cucumbers or turkeys. Those jobs were the most unpleasant as I recall as I learned that every task would not be enjoyable. I really liked to spread manure and would push myself to see how many spreader loads I could put out in a day's time. To like a task of that sort one just had to possess a strong back and a weak mind.

At times we had about 45 head of livestock and that many animals required a lot of bedding in the form of sawdust. This entailed a lot of trucking of sawdust. When portable sawmills were in the area it was no problem to find bedding, but as sawmills were fewer it became more difficult to find. We also trucked sawdust for other farms to gain a little extra income. A lot of extra cash could be earned trucking sawdust. I've been to a sawdust pile in Erving, MA, loaded a 3 1/2 cord load and come back to our area and unloaded for \$15. Now that's really making money! That sawdust all went onto the truck and off with a scoop shovel.

Sawdust piles would build up through the summer so sometimes after haying and before the rowen was ready to cut we would try to till our sawdust storage and maybe another farm's storage. This was a welcome change from haying and cultivating corn.

I well remember what an education it was to learn the inner workings of a field baler. You were in that field about all alone and, if you ran into a problem, it was up to you to dope it out and continue and you rather often had a dark thundercloud coming over your shoulder.

Again, I liked to bale hay and look back over the field and see the nice neat rows of bales with hopefully not too many broken. Some years we baled about 12,000 bales including our own. That baler and tractor, a Model 45 International and an old H Farmall, were responsible for making hay available for a great many animals. I have the remains of the old baler and when I care to reminisce about long hard days, I go and look at that old relic and think of the roads and hay fields we traveled together.

~ Carroll Stowe



### Library Lines

## Thanks to All Who Help

By Charlene Churchill

In this season of thanksgiving and holiday celebration I would like to use my space to thank some of the people who help our library be successful and run smoothly throughout the year.

Our two paid staff people are Don Purington of Colrain, the Library Assistant, and Alli Thane-Stetson, the Library Substitute. Don has been working at the library for four years and doing a great job with our Circulation Desk on Mondays and Saturdays and with interlibrary loan requests and Internet searches for information for patrons.

Alli fills in when I am on vacation or sick and has been at the library for a long time, doing two stints as Librarian before taking over the Substitute role.

We also have three regular volunteers who work for between two and four hours almost every week. They are Don Dekker, Jane deLeeuw, and Helen Mackie. These volunteers work on projects like filing card catalog cards, processing and cataloging new materials, and helping to weed our book collection and pulling cards for books that are removed from the collection.

Other volunteers help out when the Bookmobile comes with carrying materials in and out and helping to select materials. Our regular Bookmobile crew members are Alli Thane-Stetson, Helen Mackie, Don Dekker, Jane deLeeuw, Dave Gott, and Mary Sumner.

The Friends of the Library group also contributes a lot of volunteer time and effort to put on the big book sale at the Heath Fair and their annual bake sale on Memorial Day weekend to help raise money for the library.

We also have a group of recent volunteers who are serving on our Fund-raising Task Force to help raise our matching money for the Library Construction Grant we will be receiving from the state. Eric Grinnell, Cal Carr, Carol-Anne Eldridge, Dave Howland, Lenny O'Dea, and John Tierney, as well as the three Library Trustees comprise this group.

Our three Library Trustees, Deb Porter, Jan Carr, and Jane deLeeuw, are also dedicated volunteers in this critical role. They have all put in countless unpaid hours working on the construction planning, setting library policy, and deciding on issues that effect our library's future.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all of those who work for the library in both paid and unpaid roles. They are the ones who keep our library a great place to visit!

The library is again holding its holiday silent auction. Come in and bid on some great items for holiday gifts and support our library. Some of the items that are being auctioned include a used computer system, music CDs, a beading kit, an inflatable Peanuts chair, books, and other great items. Bid high and bid often! The auction will end on December 17 to give winning bidders time to pick things up before December 25.

New at the Library: Adult DVDs: *Batman Begins*, *Kingdom of Heaven*, *Winged Migration*, *Dust to Glory*, *Swordfish*, and *Twelve Angry Men*.

Children's DVDs: *Madagascar*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, *How he Grinch Stole Christmas*, *Neverending Story*, *Robots*, *Toy Story*, and *Veggie Tales*.



**Coming Soon**  
**Watch this space for further developments in**  
**the Capital**  
**Campaign for the new library!**

## Heath Business Directory

**Bald Mountain Pottery**  
625-8110

**The Benson Place**  
Blueberries & Applesauce  
337-5340

**Fred Burrington**  
Artist  
337-4302

**Coursey Design**  
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337-4751

**D.C. Builders**  
Branch Hill Road  
337-4705

**Robert Delisle**  
Electrician  
337-5716

**Russell E. Donelson**  
Design/Construction/Cabinetry  
337-4460

**Jerry Ferguson**  
Handyman - Lic. Electrician  
337-4317

**Earl M. Gleason**  
Fire Equipment  
337-4948

**Heath Brook Studio**  
Glass and Baskets  
337-5736

**Maple Ledge Farm**  
Maple Syrup Year Round  
337-4705

**John Mooney**  
Custom Remodeling  
337-8344

**Wanda Mooney**  
Realtor  
337-8344

**Alan Nichols**  
Furniture Maker  
337-6665

**C. Richards Steinbock**  
Graphic Design  
337-4746

**Tripp's Blueberries**  
Taylor Brook Road  
337-4964

**Paul Turnbull**  
**Janice Boudreau**  
Commercial/Wedding Photographers  
337-4033

**Bonnie Wodin**  
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### Support Your Local Businesses

If you would like more information about the Heath Enterprise Council, please call Alicia Tripp at 337-4964

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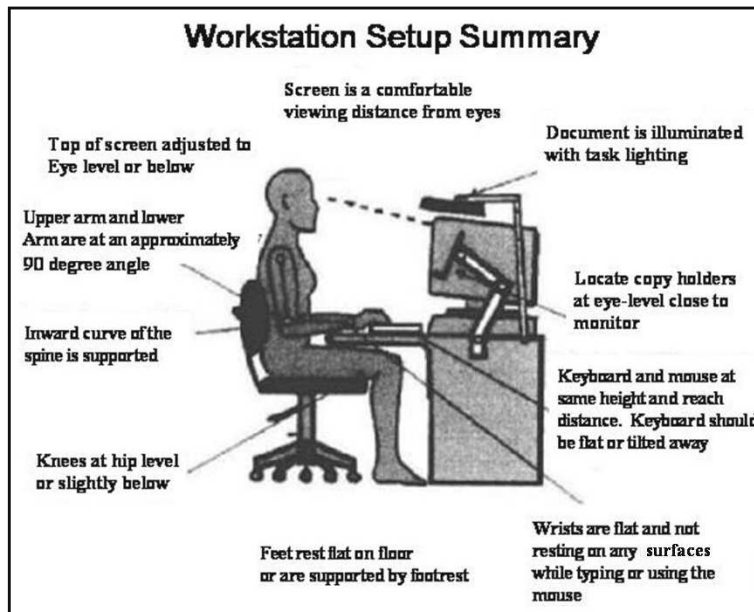
## It's Your Health and Safety

### Article #1: Working Comfortably at your Computer

In this age of computers, people spend more and more time sitting in front of their computer screens whether at home or at work. Excessive performance of the same motion or the repeated motion every few seconds for more than one hour continuously or for more than four hours overall in a day, can lead to muscle fatigue and strain. A sustained, unsupported or unnatural position of the back, neck, arm, wrist, finger, shoulder, or leg can result in symptoms of fatigue and eventually strain, unless the position is corrected.

There are many proactive actions anyone can take whenever working in a sitting position to eliminate the opportunity for muscle fatigue and injury. For example, it is important to remember that good posture all starts with the head. Any time the head and neck are bent in any direction to bring you closer to your work, the strain of this awkward position is transferred along the spine and can lead to stiffness and pain of the neck, shoulders, upper and lower back, and legs.

Here are some specific suggestions for your own computer work station. Sometimes it is possible to self-correct, and often it is helpful to get another person's objective view of your work position. We all tend to slip into a comfortable slouch or tuck our feet back under our chair while working in a sitting position. Unfortunately, after awhile these familiar positions tend to shorten the hamstrings and result in lower back pain. See if some of these suggestions help you create a more comfortable and effective posture while working in a sitting position and while at your computer.



#### Posture

- Your chair should be adjusted so that support is provided for your back. Your knees should be at hip level or slightly lower, and your feet should be flat on the floor.

#### Work Area Organization/Practices

- Arrange your work area so that you do not have to stretch or twist to reach items used frequently; bring these items closer to you.
- If your job requires constant use of the telephone, use a telephone headset or a receiver neck cushion.
- Perform occasional stretching exercises while sitting to reduce physical stress and improve blood circulation. Get up and walk about frequently if possible.

#### Computer Monitor

- The top of the screen should be at or below eye level.
- The screen should be between 22" and 24" from your eyes.
- If you use a document holder, it should be positioned at the same height, distance, and angle as your screen, and on your dominant eye side. (to determine your dominant eye, make a circle symbol with one hand by touching tip of pointer finger to tip of thumb (in an "ok" sign), stretch that arm out straight in front of you and with both eyes open look through the hand circle at a small object on a wall away from you. Then close one eye at a time and note which eye is open while that object remains within the circle made by your hand. That is your dominant eye.

#### Computer Keyboard

- The keyboard tray should be adjusted so that it is flat or tilted away from you.
- Adjust the keyboard tray between 3" and 4" below your computer tabletop. Your arms should form a 90-degree or more angle to your torso with your hands extending straight out from wrists while typing.
- If you work on a laptop for long periods (four hours + a day), it is recommended that you get an auxiliary keyboard and mouse.

#### Mouse or Track Ball

- The mouse should be positioned at the same height and distance from you as your keyboard.
- Move your mouse as close to the centerline of your body as possible, rather than out to one side.

#### Glare

- Adjust your monitor screen to minimize glare.
- If necessary, cover the windows with blinds or drapes. You can also place a glare screen over the monitor.

~ Sheila M. Litchfield, RN, BSN  
Certified Occupational Health Nurse

## Milestones

**Dorothy Carmen Benton Adamski** of York, ME, mother of former, longtime Heath resident, **Susan Silvester Samoriski**, died at home on October 24, 2005.

Born in Colrain on May 7, 1912, she was the daughter of Elmer and Emmaline Smith Benton. While in high school, she moved to Shelburne Falls and graduated from the Arms Academy in 1927. She attended Drury Normal School in North Adams for a year before beginning nursing studies at Simmons College. In 1959, she and her husband, William Anthony Adamski, moved to York, ME.

Mr. Adamski died in 1996. In addition to her daughter of Buckland, she is survived by another daughter, Sarah Hite, of Buckley, WVA, two grand-daughters and a grandson.

Memorial contributions may be made to the York Volunteer Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 238, York, ME 03904.



Two holiday fairs were held on November 5 in the Community Hall and in the Heath Union Church. Those who attended found a wide selections of crafts and homemade goodies to purchase and a raffle to support the Community Hall.

## Heath People In The News

**Sayde White**, daughter of **John** and **Wanda Musacchio**, and **Jason Zillo**, son of **Charles** and **Mariann Zillo** of Youngstown, Ohio, were married on November 12, 2005, in Treasure Cay, Abaco, the Bahamas.

Attending were John and Wanda; brother Dominic, grandmother Mafalda of Greenfield, formerly of Heath, and many other family members.

The couple resides in the East Village of Manhattan, New York City.



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## Heath Fire-Rescue News

The Department would like to welcome Jacob Smead as our newest member. WELCOME ABOARD, JACOB!

**Remember to check your batteries in your smoke alarms!**

### News from the Governor's Desk

Recently Governor Romney signed into law two bills that have an impact on fire services statewide. The first is Nicole's Law. This law named after Nicole Garafalo who died earlier this year when carbon monoxide blocked up in her home from a blocked heating vent. It requires all residential buildings that have enclosed parking, boilers, furnaces, and hot water heaters to have working carbon monoxide detectors. It will be the job of local fire departments to inspect residences prior to sale or transfer of a property to ensure compliance with the law.

The Governor also signed into law legislation requiring municipalities to provide death benefits, in the amount of \$500,000, to its volunteer and part-time public safety officers. Municipalities have three choices: purchase an annuity, an insurance policy that provides a one-time benefit, or an insurance policy that would cover the cost of an annuity.

### Longevity

The Firefighters Association held their annual dinner recently, and this writer was honored to learn that many members have been on the department for a long time: Bob Gruen, Mike Smith, and Budge Litchfield, 20 years plus, Robert Tanner and Steve Bigelow, 30 years of service, and Earl and Walt Gleason have been members since 1948. As a relatively new firefighter when compared to these local heroes, I am honored to be working

alongside and learning from them. I am sure that we Heathans are thankful for having these men among us in our town.

### Fund-raiser

The Fire Department and the nurses at Baystate Medical Center are jointly sponsoring a fund-raiser for Michael and Crystal Smith on February 4, 2006, at Stillwaters Restaurant in Charlemont. The aim of this is to help defray the expenses the family will incur during Mike's treatment. They are the ones who are there for us when we need them; now it is our turn to help them. There are various ways to contribute and, of this writing, an account is being established to help with this. One of the ways is a silent auction, so if you have any products or services you could donate to this cause or if you need more information, please contact Budge Litchfield at 337-4957.

OUR PRAYERS ARE WITH THE SMITH FAMILY

~ Jeff Simmons

## Community Calendar

### December 2005

- December 12** – Enchanted Circle Theater, Heath Elementary School, 9:30 a.m.
- December 14** - Winter Concert, The Academy at & 15 Charlemont, 7:00 p.m.
- December 14** - Mohawk District Early Release Day  
- MTRSD School Committee,  
Mohawk Trail High School, 7:00 p.m.
- December 15** - LEC Meeting, Heath School, 4:30 p.m.  
- Heath Agricultural Society Meeting ,  
Heath School 7:00 p.m.
- December 16** - PTP Family Movie Night. Heath School, 7:00 p.m.
- December 17** - Senior Christmas Luncheon, 11:45 a.m..
- December 19** - Winter Break begins - The Academy at Charlemont
- December 23** - Holiday Vacation begins, Mohawk Regional schools
- December 25** - **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**  
**HAPPY HANUKAH!**

### January 2006

- January 01** - **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**
- January 03** - School resumes, Mohawk Regional schools and The Academy at Charlemont
- January 05** - PTP Meeting, Heath School, 6:30 p.m.  
- Senior Luncheon 11:45 a.m.
- January 16** - Martin Luther King Day - school holiday
- January 19** - LEC Meeting, Heath School 4:30 p.m.  
- Heath Agricultural Society Meeting  
Heath School 7:00 p.m.  
- Senior Luncheon 11:45 a.m.
- January 19/20** - High School early dismissal, exams
- January 20** - PTP Family Movie Night, 7:00 p.m.
- January 23** - High School In-service , no school

## Heath's Monthly Precipitation (inches)

(Observed by Heath School Staff and Students)

	<u>Rain</u>	<u>Snow</u>
From September 11, '05	2 ½"	
October '05	21"	1 ½"
Up to November 10, '05	1 ½"	

### In This Reporting Period:

The highest temperature was on July 19 and 27 : 90 degrees.  
The coldest temperature was on November 3: 28 degrees

The big event for this reporting period was the weekend rainstorm of October 8 and 9. Due to a stalled frontal boundary and the remnants of "Tammy," most places in Heath reported anywhere from 9 ½ to 11 inches of rain that produced flooding. The following weekend the town saw another three inches of rain due to a frontal boundary that was enhanced by the remnants of "Wilma." The first snow of the season appeared on October 25 and dropped about 1 ½ inches of snow in some sections of town.



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