

THE WAKEFIELD DAILY ITEM

Journey to Nepal brings local attorney back "home"

Patrick G. Curley revisits the Lophel Ling Tibetan School

WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 2, 2005
Wakefield, MA 01880

(Wakefield Attorney Patrick G. Curley just returned from a trip to the remote Nepali Himalayas to revisit the Lophel Ling Tibetan School where he was a volunteer math teacher for 10 weeks in the spring 2001. Here's Part I of a two-part account of his journey.)

By PATRICK G. CURLEY
Unfortunately, the political situation declined considerably after I departed Nepal on June 1, 2001. That evening, the Crown Prince, who was heir to the throne, murdered his parents the King and Queen of Nepal along with nine other members of the Nepali Royal family. The King's brother - who happened to have been out of the country at the time of the murders - assumed the throne but many citizens question his legitimacy and hint that he may have been behind the murders.

The Maoist insurgency, which had simmered since 1996 and left more than 1,200 dead, increased dramatically following the Royal mur-



LOCAL ATTORNEY Patrick Curley with some of the children from the Lophel Ling Tibetan School wearing hooded fleece jackets that he brought to the school in the remote Nepali Himalayas.

ders and resulting political vacuum. In the last four years, an additional 10,000 Maoists, military, police and civilians have been killed in the conflict.

Earlier this year the King dismissed the government, imposed emergency rule and suspended civil rights

including freedom of expression, assembly and privacy. In response to sharp criticism at home and abroad, the King has thrown hundreds of politicians, journalists and students in prison.

Tourism - the life blood of Nepal - has dropped by two-thirds or more since its peak

in 1999 because Westerners are afraid to go there.

Indeed, the United States, Japan and Australia explicitly order their citizens to defer all non-essential travel to Nepal. It is estimated that the Maoists may control