



THE

Gill Newsletter

June 2010 Issue

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Town Hall News

Annual Town Meeting Update

REMINDER: Annual Town Meeting is Monday, June 21st at 7 PM upstairs in the Town Hall. ALL REGISTERED GILL VOTERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND. If the meeting requires more than one night, the following Monday, June 28th has been suggested as the “continued to” date. (Not June 23rd as previously reported.) Please watch the newspapers and town website for details about warrant articles and other materials. Information will be posted as it becomes available.

Pre-Town Meeting

A Pre-Town Meeting information session is scheduled for Tuesday, June 15th at 6:30 PM. This will be an opportunity for residents to learn more about the various articles on the warrant, including budget matters and other topics being recommended for Town Meeting action.

Public Hearing on Stretch Energy Code Bylaw

The Energy Commission has proposed the Town adopt a “Stretch Energy Code Bylaw”, which would cause buildings in Gill to be constructed to more energy efficient building code standards. On Tuesday, June 15th at 6:30 PM, as part of the Pre-Town Meeting, the Selectboard will hold a Public Hearing on this proposed bylaw. More details about the Stretch Energy Code can be found in this newsletter.

Community Development Block Grant Application

Through the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), the Town is applying to the

Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant Program for funding for activities that will benefit the community. In order to receive funding, the HRA must first conduct a survey to determine if the residents who will benefit from the project collectively meet certain household income guidelines.

The survey will be mailed in early June, and should be returned by June 30th to the HRA using the postage-paid envelope. The information will be kept confidential and used only by the HRA to compute community averages. It is important that residents return this survey—we need a 90% return rate before the HRA will compute the averages and determine our eligibility for this grant.

If you have any questions about the survey or the proposed project, please call the Selectboard’s Office at 413-863-9347.

Housing Rehabilitation Program

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is generating a waiting list for Housing Rehabilitation Loans on behalf of the Town of Gill.



Check in with the
 Gill Website
www.gillmass.org
 for up to date news,
 announcements and
 contact information!



Income eligible applicants who qualify for a full-deferred payment loan will be able to borrow up to \$30,000 to \$35,000. This is a 0% interest, deferred payment loan, the loan is secured by a mortgage recorded on your property, and the loan is due when you sell or transfer the property.

The goal of this program is to enable low to moderate-income homeowners to bring their homes into code compliance, handicap accessibility, do needed repairs and weatherize their homes.

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

# in Household	Gross Annual Income
1	\$43,450
2	\$49,700
3	\$55,900
4	\$62,100
5	\$67,050
6	\$72,050
7	\$77,000
8	\$81,950

If you are interested in being added to the waiting list, please contact Charity at 413-863-9781 ext.132 or cday@fchra.org

Surplus Equipment

At the request of the Fire Department, the Selectboard has declared as surplus equipment our inventory of Motorola low-band radios, pagers, and related accessories. The Fire Department now uses high-band equipment which was received through a grant. If anyone is interested in buying any of the low-band equipment, please contact the Selectboard's Office at 413-863-9347.

*Ray Purington,
Administrator Assistant*

Additional Land

The Town has a desperate need for additional land for another cemetery in Gill. The three town-owned cemeteries only have about 12 plots total remaining for sale. While it may look like there are empty spaces, most of those spaces are lots that have already been sold. If you have land that you may be willing to donate, please contact Carrie Stevens of the Cemetery Commission at 413-863-8781.

Gill Cultural Council

The Gill Cultural Council has been working to expand opportunities for cultural enrichment for all Gill residents, bringing artists, performers, historians, and others to entertain, educate, and enlighten at favorite venues around town, including the Gill Tavern, the Town Hall, the Gill Elementary School, and the Slate Library. As well, the Council has funded various programs within the larger, local area that serve many of us and our neighbors, and enhance the quality of life for many Valley residents; the Shea Theater, United Arc, The Gill-Montague Senior Center, and the Franklin County Family Network have all benefited from our funding this year. In addition to the many varied programs we were able to fund this year, we are beginning to organize additional programs that offer residents the chance to explore and enjoy the many excellent museums and other cultural hotspots within the valley, in the Berkshires, and other nearby regions, thereby broadening the scope of what we can provide and expanding the cultural experience for all. On Saturday, June 26, the Cultural

Council's "Art Bus" is making its inaugural trip with a "Mystery Museum Hopping Tour." This all day tour will take us to 3 (possibly 4) distinctive art museums. The tour costs \$20 a person. For more info or to register (only 14 people can sign up), email Steve Damon a damons_of_gill@yahoo.com. Plans are also afoot for the 2nd trip of "Art Bus" in August!

This winter, the Council gave partial funding to an Art is Fun with Adults and Kids program for Community Action and Franklin County Family Network, as well as full funding for the United Arc's Positive Parenting's "Picture This" photography project. In March, the Country Players presented six performances of "The Miracle Worker" at the Shea Theater, and while the Gill Cultural Council originally funded a sign language interpreter for the play, money was reallocated to help subsidize school group attendance once the interpreter fell through. In April, the Shea hosted Arena Civic Theatre's performance of "To Kill a Mockingbird" as part of a wider celebration of the 50th anniversary of the publication of this timeless, influential novel. Council funding enabled A.C.T. to offer a \$6 ticket price for school children. On May 9 at the Rhodes Art Center on the Northfield Mount Hermon campus, the Da Camera Singers, directed by Sheila Heffernon, celebrated forty years in the valley with the premier performance of a special work commissioned from Shutesbury composer Karen Tarlow.

In early April at the town hall, Dave Allen presented a fascinating look at the history of Gill through a series of beautiful old maps in a PowerPoint Historic Map presentation made to a packed house. Cultural Council mem-



ber Emily Samuels worked with Dave to specifically transcribe the names of Gill residents in the early 1800's as written on one of the old maps; this allows greater access to not only the history of Gill but also that of Gill's families, and will benefit historians and genealogists and family history sleuths alike. The maps have been issued to the Historical Commission for future use. To see the 1858 map of Gill, with indexed names of all residents, go to <http://www.vhist.com/mcc/gill/1858GillAnalysis.htm>.

Programs funded by the Cultural Council for the Gill Elementary School included Kim Gregory's costumed interpretation of the Life of Young George Washington in February, a series of spring workshops by Linda Peck Scalise, and a performance (date TBA) by valley favorite storyteller and funnyman John Porcino.

Once the weather starts to warm up, several Cultural Council-funded events and ongoing series will resume. Friday Night Films at Riverside promises a lot of family fun this summer, showing double features for kids and adults on the 1st and 3rd Fridays each month as weather permits. Common People Concerts, held outdoors on the common on Tuesday evenings, and featuring local musicians, food, and fun, will return in June and entertain all summer long. The Council has also funded live music for the Friends of Gill's Picnic on the Common in June, and for their Fall Arts & Crafts Festival in October. The Council has also funded several programs for the Slate Library and its upcoming Summer Reading Program. Look for a Nature Journals program with Northampton-based artist Jeannie Hunt in July, as well as a family program that will kick off a summer full of fun happenings at the

library. As well, local favorite storyteller Davis Bates will be back with Celebrating New England: a Concert for Families.

In August, the Gill-Montague Senior Center in Turners Falls will be playing host to Richard Clark's presentation of A. R. Gurney's two-person play, "Love Letters," another Council-funded performance. Set in the World War II era, this Broadway hit offers a poignant and humorous look at life and love as told through the reading of letters between a man and a woman, childhood friends whose lifelong correspondence grows into a rich, meaningful, lifelong relationship.

Thanks to the Massachusetts Cultural Council for their continued support, the town for their enthusiastic participation, and the Council members for their hard work.

Liz Gardner, Chair

Gill Elementary School

June 21, our last day of school for this year, will mark the end of another successful year at Gill Elementary School. We have maintained a vibrant school community with all classrooms close to capacity and I anticipate that this trend of families choosing to send their children to Gill from neighboring communities will continue into next year. Many are drawn here by the strong sense of community, the quality of the academics and the beautiful setting that characterize our school. Many thanks to the townspeople who support this healthy learning environment for children and to the families who entrust us with their children.

We have also benefited from our

growing connections with Northfield Mount Hermon. This year students from NMH have taught our 4th -6th graders Spanish. They have presented several artistic performances, including a dance recital and 4 small theater pieces. They have done some individual projects in classrooms and shared stories of their travels to New Zealand. On the community service day, NMH students came and stained our new storage shed. Our school community is enriched by this meeting of our students and these high school students.

I also need to acknowledge the contributions of our staff to the education of our students. It is the quality of our staff that makes the biggest difference in the quality of education at Gill Elementary School. Each teacher at Gill skillfully guides the students through the curriculum in a caring and supportive manner. This year several staff have garnered special recognition for the caliber of their teaching. Coincidentally these teachers are both Gill residents.

Joanne Flagg, our sixth grade teacher, along with Nancy Meagher, our Art teacher, wrote a grant that they submitted to our local Gill-Montague Education Fund (GMEF). The GMEF is an in-district group that raises money through events, such as concerts, or donations, which they then use to support special projects in the district. The GMEF generously covered the costs of this project. Joanne and Nancy's grant, entitled Time Travel in New England—Pangaea to Pests, combined several aspects of the sixth grade curriculum—the scientific study of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, the study of the various landscapes of New England beginning with Pangaea,



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and art as a way to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts. Joanne took her students to the Harvard Forest in Petersham where they identified and measured the destructive effects of the Adelgid, an invasive pest, on the local forest of Hemlock trees. They also visited the Fisher Museum to see some museum-quality dioramas. Back at Gill, Nancy guided the students in a variety of artistic experiences. The students made detailed botanical drawings and linoleum cut-prints of hemlock branches. They printed the drawings into their Nature Journals, onto stationary and onto small sachet pillows that they filled with dried Hemlock. They also worked in pairs to create a series of 6 dioramas that are currently displayed at our school. The dioramas will also be on display on May 8 at the Great Falls Discovery Center. I am also very pleased to share that this project has been acknowledged for its excellence by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

I also congratulate Steve Damon. His dedication to music education garnered him the Lowell Mason Award, named after the gentleman who instituted the music program in the Boston Public Schools. This award is given to just one individual in the state of Massachusetts on a yearly basis.

Although we all look forward to summer vacation, the school feels so empty and hollow without the students. I personally will look forward to next fall when we are together once again and have the chance to embark on a new year of learning.

Sincerely,
Rita Detweiler, Principal



Stephen Greenwald
President

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Agricultural Commission

The AgCom threw its first event of the growing season with a "Sugar House Open House" on March 21. Four sugar houses—NMH, Turkey Ridge, Boyle Rd. Sugarhouse, and Upinngil—participated. Bill Burnham from Turkey Ridge estimated 40 tourists trudged up his hill to visit him that afternoon.

There was a contest held during the Open House. Anna Baskowski of Main Rd. wrote down the 4 "Magic Words"—evaporator, arch, amber, sap—that were listed in the sugarhouses. Colleen Lilly of Just a Dream Farm drew Anna's entry from all that were received. The prize was a bagful of Gill produce—squash, flour (Upinngil); ice cream, cheese, rosemary, lavender soap (NMH); raspberries (Damon's Dirt); ground emu (Songline Emu); garlic, and rhubarb (Laughing Dog).

We have published a Gill restaurant guide, which lists the Gill



eateries and whence they purchase their local produce. Look for the restaurant guide and the farm guide (produced last spring) on the town website. Printed guides can be found at Town Hall.

Our next farmers' market will be held in conjunction with the Friends of Gill's picnic on Saturday, June 19 from 10AM-2PM on the Common.

If you serve on a town committee, you have probably been treated to All-Gill snacks at your meetings. We have continued to serve cheese, berries, ice cream, bread, and eggs to the town committees. Now that spring is again here, the veggies will once again fill the spotlight of All-Gill snacks. Back in the dead of winter, the town hall staff was treated to a complete Gill lunch of meat loaf, corn, broccoli, and sugar-on-snow!

Did you realize some farmers have to pay an excise tax for their animals and equipment? I think of it as bakers paying excise tax on their mixers and ovens. Or carpenters paying excise tax on hammers and nails. Gill AgCom has started to investigate how to exempt our farmers from this tax, as the towns of Leyden, Buckland, Heath, and many others have done. Much more information will be forthcoming.

We are lucky to live in Gill—a Right to Farm town.

With Dirt Under My Fingernails,
Steve Damon, Chairperson, Gill Agricultural Commission

The Town's Collector-Treasurer's Office will be closed on June 21, 22, and 23, 2010.

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FRIENDS OF GILL

Gill Picnic on the Common

**Saturday, June 19, 2010
10 AM — 1 PM**

Bring your lawn chair or blanket and enjoy food and fun for the whole family.

FOOD!

- chips, cold drinks, hot dogs, hamburgers, and "famous fries" cooked by the Gill Firemen's Association
- strawberry shortcake prepared by the Friends of Gill
- cotton candy served by the Gill PTO

FUN!

- music for your enjoyment
- Farmer's Market sponsored by the Gill Agricultural Commission
- plants for sale
- a special display provided by the Gill Historical Commission
- children's activities at the Gill Library

Music is made possible through a grant from the Gill Cultural Council

See you there – rain or shine!



Slate Library News

It's that time again where we gear up for summer fun and reading at Slate Library. We have fun filled summer jam packed with activities for children and their families. This year's theme chosen by the Massachusetts Library Association is "Go Green at Your Library", and Slate library will have a bevy of nature related events to entertain and enlighten.

The full roster of Saturday morning events is listed below:

JUNE 26 Gerwick puppets presents The Twig Family in the Oak Tree. This original story by puppeteer Deborah Costine is about a family of imaginary twig people who live in an oak tree in harmony with nature. They share a tree with robins, a gray squirrel and a tree frog. Natural science, storytelling and fantasy combine to make this an enchanting show for all ages. This program is funded by a grant from the Gill Cultural Council and Massachusetts Cultural Council.

JULY 3 Fossil workshop led by John Clarke and John Roberts. This popular program was a success when held several years ago. Join us for an amazing up-close look at the world of fossils. Learn what a fossil is and how and why it forms. This workshop will include hands-on activities and a chance to see some awesome fossils.

JULY 10 Jeannie Hunt, a Northampton based book artist will lead a book-making workshop entitled "Hand Crafted Nature Journals". Children will create their own miniature journal and use them for exploring and learning about the natural world. Together participants will gather materials (seeds, branches, leaves, etc) from our local environment and draw and write in their hand made books. This workshop is funded by the Gill Cultural Council, a branch of the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

JULY 17 Block printing with Natural Imagery. In this program participants will design a linoleum print based on drawings they create from our natural world. Subject matter can range from landscape to animal portraiture. After cutting their linoleum block, students will learn techniques for inking and printing.

JULY 24 Kelly Flaherty of Henna Elements will introduce participants to this beautiful ancient art form from India and the Middle East. Leaves of the henna plant are crushed into a paste and used as a natural paint in ceremonies and rituals around the world. Come explore the history and art of the henna plant.

JULY 31 Davis Bates, singer and storyteller extraordinaire will entertain families of all ages on the lawn outside Slate Library.



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This will be a multi-cultural program of stories and songs that celebrate diversity and the environment. Great fun for all!! This workshop is also funded by the Gill Cultural Council and Massachusetts Cultural Council, and we thank them for their support in making our summer an educational an enriching one for all members of our community.

Please join us at one or all of our summer events. Pre-registration is required for many of the workshops so please sign up during our open hours.

As always, we invite you to check out a book and pull up a chair. Pre-school story hour continues each Friday morning at 10 AM through June 18. We hope to see you soon!

Gill Historical Commission

The Gill Historical Commission meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 PM in the Riverside Building on Route 2. The Commission is charged with planning for the preservation of historical sites and records within Gill. In addition to its other projects, the Commission maintains records and artifacts of Gill history in the Riverside municipal building. If you have information or questions about Gill and its history, please contact Kit Carpenter, Bev Demars, Stuart Elliott, Bob Perry, Lynda Hodsdon-Mayo, or Pam Shoemaker.

Come to the Gill picnic in June and see the table of goodies from the Gill Historical Commission! We have family information, maps of the Gill cemeteries, and maps of Gill from the 18th century. Bring your stories and your questions!

Common People Concerts 2010!

- June 22** Andy Davis - Traditional songs and stories
- June 29** Amandla Chorus - Power through music
- July 6** Jonathan Hohl-Kennedy and Amy Burnhard
Traditional Irish music
- July 13** Saxophone Night - Smooth and curvy music
- July 20** Monadnock Steel Drums - Caribbean sounds
- July 27** Rosemarie Caine and Friends - Celtic harp/song
- August 3** Eric Goodchild - Bagpipes
- August 10** Chris Snow - singer/songwriter

Tuesdays at 7 PM on the Gill Common. FREE! Bring your change for refreshments. In the Gill Congregational Church should it rain. Funded by the Gill Cultural Council.



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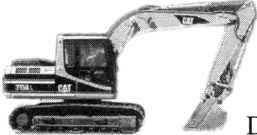




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Disclaimer:

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editors, the organizing committee or town officials and should not be construed as such. Although we work to produce accurate and typographically correct copy, we and our advertisers cannot be responsible for errors or the accuracy of materials submitted to us.

Next Newsletter Deadline

July 15th for the August Issue.

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