



THE

Gill Newsletter

February 2011 Issue

CONTENTS

Town Hall News.....	1
Town Clerk	2
Treasurer.....	3
Gill Fire Dept.....	3
Gill Energy Comm....	3
Slate Library	4
Gill Historical Comm..	5
Friends of Gill.....	7

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Town Hall News

Special Town Meeting Results

The Special Town Meeting on Monday, December 20th lasted just over 10 minutes as 22 registered voters quickly dealt with the 5 warrant articles.

Article 1 passed by unanimous vote and lowered our June town meeting appropriation for the Gill-Montague Regional School District by \$38,121. This brings the Town's appropriation in line with the amount approved at the District-Wide meeting in November.

Article 2 was passed over. Both the Selectboard and Finance Committee recommended waiting until nearer to the end of the fiscal year to allocate money to pay for veterans' benefits.

Article 3 passed by unanimous vote and created & funded an Education Stabilization Fund. This fund is to be used "for the payment of assessments from or otherwise in support of the Gill Montague Regional School District and/or the Franklin County Technical School." Voters appropriated \$38,121 into this fund.

Article 4 passed by unanimous vote and transferred \$4,500 from Free Cash to the general Stabilization Fund. In June voters approved using money from the Stabilization Fund to purchase and install a dump body for the 1990 Highway truck, with the understanding that once Free Cash was certi-

fied, the money would be returned to Stabilization. This transfer covers most of the project's cost; there will most likely be another transfer requested at a future meeting for the remaining balance.

Article 5 passed by majority vote and allows Gill's restaurants and clubs with alcohol licenses to apply to the Selectboard for permission to serve alcohol from 10AM to noon on Sundays.

The complete minutes from the meeting are available on the Town website (www.gillmass.org) in the Documents section.

Town Reports

The 2009 Town Report has been printed and is now available at the Town Hall and Library. It can also be viewed and downloaded from the Town website.

Because of a change approved by voters in 2009, this report covers the 6-month period from January 1 to June 30, 2009. The next report, which is now being written by the various departments, boards, and committees, will cover the



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



2010 Fiscal Year, from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010.

Your Gill-themed photos are wanted for the next Annual Report! If you have a photo of your favorite person, place or thing in Gill, please send it to Ray Purington at the Town Hall. High-resolution digital photos are preferred, and can be in color or black and white. Email them to:

administrator@gillmass.org.

Also, most Town Reports are dedicated to one or more people who have made a difference in Gill. If you have a suggestion for the 2010 report, please get it to Ray.

A Burning Desire

Burning season is from January 15–May 1, 2011. Burning brush requires a permit and can only be done during burning season. If a Gill resident would like to burn brush on a given day, please go to the website for Franklin County Burn Permits (www.fcburnpermits.com) and complete the online permit. If you don't have computer access, please call 625-8200, and Shelburne Control will assist you.

Broadband Internet

Governor Deval Patrick created the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC), when he signed the Broadband Act into law in August 2008. The mission of the

MBI is to extend affordable high-speed Internet access to all homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices and other public places across our state. The MBI is collecting information about high-speed internet availability throughout the Commonwealth. This information will be used to create state and national maps of broadband availability. The maps will be used to identify unserved and underserved areas that need additional resources.

As a citizen, you can contribute important information about services available at your home or business. Take MBI's broadband survey to tell them if you have access to high-speed internet and what service you use. Follow the link on the homepage of Gill's website (www.gillmass.org). For more information about the MBI visit www.mass-broadband.org.

Winter Parking Ban in Effect

After the street-clogging snowstorm of January 12th, it seems worth repeating... there is NO on-street parking allowed between the hours of 1AM and 6AM November 1 through April 15.

*Ray Purington,
Administrator Assistant*

From the Town Clerk

Census forms are out:

Please check the mail for Census forms from the Town Clerk. These forms are used for updating our Street List and ensuring accurate voter information. Please make corrections and sign before returning. If you did not receive a Census form, please call the Town Clerk at 863-8103.

Dog licenses are in:

The census mailing also includes an opportunity to license your dog. Please return the information to the Town Clerk with the proper payment. The fee is \$5 if the dog is spayed or neutered and \$10 for all others. All dogs must be licensed by March 31st to avoid a late fee.

Town Election

Town of Gill Annual Town Election is May 16th this year. Nomination papers are available in the Town Clerks office and can be obtained no later than March 24th. The last day to submit the nomination papers is March 28th.

If you have any questions, please contact the Town Clerk at 863-8103. The Town Clerk's open office hours are Monday through Thursday 1PM to 4PM and 5:30PM to 6:30PM on Monday evenings.



From the Treasurer Gill Fire Department

The Treasurer's office in the Town of Gill is looking for current addresses of the following former employees of the town:

Hannah Balk

Caitlin Sullivan

Michael Lyons

If you have any information on these people, please call Ronnie LaChance at 413-863-2105 or e-mail her at collector-treasurer@gillmass.org

Real estate and property tax bills

The 2011 actual real estate and personal property tax bills are being mailed out on February 8, 2011.

The Town of Gill's new tax rate for 2011 is \$13.90. If anyone does not receive a tax bill please call the Collector's office at 413-863-2105.

Taxes are due on or before May 2, 2011.

If anyone thinks their valuation is incorrect you can obtain an application for abatement. The application forms are available at the Assessors office or on the town web site www.gillmass.org, the deadline for filing the application is May 1, 2011. Any questions on abatements please call the Assessors office at: 413-863-0138.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Carbon Monoxide is known as the Odorless Killer because it is a poisonous gas that has no visible color, taste, or odor. Each year, many people die or are injured from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning. CO alarms are intended to provide the early warning signs that smoke alarms provide in fires. Recent changes in Massachusetts law require that smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms be installed on every level of the home, including habitable portions of basements and attics. On levels with sleeping areas, carbon monoxide alarms should be installed within ten feet of bedroom doors. Levels of the home that do not have inhabitable living spaces are not required to have CO alarms. Landlords must install and maintain CO alarms in every dwelling unit that has a source of carbon monoxide, like a furnace or attached garage. More information about smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarm requirements is available online at www.gillma.org. Follow the link to the Fire Department page. Call the Fire Department at 863-8955 if you need further information on smoke detectors or carbon monoxide alarms.

Brush Permit Season

Brush burning season runs from January 15 to May 1, 2011. Gill residents who wish to burn brush, sticks, or fallen tree limbs may apply for a permit online at www.fcburn-permits.com. Gill residents without computer access may call the regional dispatch center at 625-8200 to obtain a permit. Fires must be at least 75 feet from buildings, contained, and attended. Residents may not burn trees, logs, stumps, leaves, trash, or demolition materials. Fires must begin before noon and be completely extinguished before 4 PM. Call the Fire Department at 863-8955 if you need further information on burn permits.

Gill Energy Commission

The Gill Energy Commission will be holding a FREE Winsert (insulated window insert) Workshop on Saturday, February 26, 1-4PM at the Gill Town Hall, 325 Main Road, Gill. "Winserts" are reusable transparent wooden panels that fit snugly inside window jambs to add two extra layers of glazing. The workshop will be presented by Brian Nugent who has been teaching winserts workshops for over 4 years. Brian says with a properly-constructed winsert, heat loss from a typical single- or double-glazed window will be reduced by up to 50%, thus more than paying for the cost of the



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winserts in less than one year. The design was inspired by a long-forgotten FEMA website and has been adapted by Brian Nugent and other North Quabbin Energy members. The winserts can be used for many heating seasons with a little maintenance from time to time. Winserts require some basic woodworking equipment and skills to make, particularly in the construction of the frame. All materials needed are available in local hardware stores. Please bring a tape measure, hair dryer, sharp knife, hand screwdriver, drill, staple gun or small nails for attaching plastic tabs and/or hand saw if possible.

Make plans now to join us in learning how to make this low cost energy efficient improvement for your home or business. The winserts made at this workshop will be used in the windows in the downstairs offices of the Gill Town Hall. Space is limited! Registration is required.

To register call Ivan Ussach at (413) 773-3830 or email encom@gillmass.org include subject: Winserts workshop.

submitted by Pamela J. Lester

Slate Library News

Winter greetings from Slate Memorial Library in the center of Gill. As I look out the library window at the fields and town covered with sparkling snow I feel glad I have a good book to curl up with. Slate Library has many new titles to offer its patrons, such as "Wicked Appetite" the latest by Janet Evanovich, as well as Ken Folletts' "The Fall of Giants" or Anita Shreve's "Rescue". Non-fiction titles include "Life" by Keith Richards, "The Last Boy: Mickey



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Mantle” by Jane Leavy and “Cleopatra” by Stacey Schuff.

We also have several new audiobooks thanks to a grant provided by the Friends of the Western Massachusetts Library System. Audio books on CD make for an entertaining way to travel and new titles include all three books of Stieg Larssons’ Millennium trilogy as well as newer titles such as “One Day” by David Nichols and “The Story of Edgar Sawtelle” by David Wroblewski.

In the children’s area the graphic novel section continues to grow due to high demand from our young readers. Check out the Amulet series by Kazu Kibuishi or the ever popular Bone cycle by Jeff Smith. For younger children we have beautiful new picture books such as “Big Red Lollipop” by Rukshana Khan and “Busing for Brewster” by Richard Michelson. We welcome families and caregivers each Friday morning at 10AM as Slate Library Story Hour continues throughout the winter months. Come for stories, a seasonal craft project, popcorn and good company!

Stop by for a visit and find out more about upcoming events, such as a Valentine workshop held on Saturday morning February 12 at 10AM. Joins us for a morning spent with ribbon, doilies, glitter and glue, creating a keepsake for the special ones in your family. We welcome your ideas for upcoming events and would like the community to know that we are your public library. Consider starting a book group or knitting group, the library would be happy to host your events. We are also interested in acquiring a few volunteers for a couple of hours a month/ or week to help with our creation of an on-line catalogue. This project was undertaken some time ago but with a few



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community volunteers it could become closer to completion! Slate Library is open Tuesday 2-6PM, Thursday 2-8 PM and Saturday 10-12. For more information call (413) 863-2591 during library hours.

Gill Historical Commission

The Gill Historical Commission meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30PM 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.

Thinking about the importance of the Connecticut River and ferries in Gill's history, we have chosen excerpts from a piece Emma Barton wrote in January 1938.

The first white settlers in our Connecticut Valley came up the river by boat; later as news of the wonderful fertility of the river lands reached the settlers on the seaboard, they came through the wilderness. The only means of transportation was on horseback or by oxen teams.

The smaller streams could be forded, but when the Connecticut was reached, a different problem was presented. With ingenuity and determination, the settlers built boats or rafts, and established ferries. (For example, in Gill, Munn's Ferry, Stacy's later Morgan's Ferry, and Stebbin's,) In most cases, the ferries were named for their managers, but sometimes took the name of the locality as the "hockanum" between that section of Southampton and Northampton. . . . The ferries were mostly operated by wires stretched across the stream, but one by steam power and also one of chain and swing, are mentioned in records.

The old time ferryman and his duties are well described by Herbert C. Parsons's history of Northfield, *A Puritan Outpost*. The Ferry was a social institution. Its ferryman was the repository of all the news, was in everybody's con-



fidence, an authority on events recent and remote, local and national, inescapably a philosopher. The craft was a flat boat capable of carrying as many as four carriages when skillfully interlapped. A stout wire anchored on each shore passed through two posts on the up-stream side of the boat and a small pulley wheel on each kept down their friction. The ferryman carried a mallet shaped wooden implement with a deep slot to slip over the wire. He was the motor. Gripping the wire at the front post he walked the length of the boat thus propelling it by just as long a distance as he walked. His mastery of the process was such that his conversation with his fares was unbroken.

. . . At Bissell's Ferry, above the Falls, crossing near round hill in Riverside, Remington, the ferryman in 1820, was crossing a man horse, and a pair of oxen in flood time; the ferry overturned, and both men were drowned, the boat and animals carried over the dam; the yoke broke, and the horse and one ox landed on the shore below with the remaining ox floating to the small island near the mouth of Fall River. His bellowing disturbed the whole neighborhood for several days until the water receded enough to allow his rescue.

The ordinary way of signaling the ferryman was by blowing a tin dinner horn, which was hung on a post near the landing. . . . A bell was hung on a small building at Stebbins Ferry, but the usual method was a "Hello Boat" shouted loudly by the waiting passengers.

The last ferry to be put in operation was 1834 when John Munn petitioned for a road. The request was granted on condition that he maintain a ferry, which he and his descendants continued for many years. The revenue from toll during the later years was so small that the towns had to furnish the boat and pay a yearly bonus to the ferryman. The last boat in use here was brought up from Morgan's Ferry, which crossed to Northfield Farms, when that was discontinued about 1915; the boat continued in service at Munn's Ferry until the fall of 1935. . .

The coming of the automobile was the death blow to several of the local ferries as the detour necessary to reach a bridge was considered preferable to waiting for the slow crossing and driving up and down the steep and sandy banks to say nothing of the toll charges. Thus another relic of the old horse and buggy days has passed. The good old times of which we often speak, but would not enjoy living in, had more privations than the comforts of modern times.

THE FRIENDS OF GILL

Will Spring ever come? According to the calendar the first day of Spring is Sunday March 20th. Most likely there will still be snow on the ground on Saturday the 26th but come join the friends of Gill as they celebrate the change of season with their annual Pancake Breakfast in the Gill Congregational Church from 8 to 10:30AM.

The Friends of Gill are known throughout the valley for serving the best pancakes in Franklin County. There will also be plenty of made-in-Gill maple syrup, sausage, coffee, milk, and orange juice. The room is always alive with friendly conversation so be sure to put the date on your calendar.



Business Advertisements

The Gill Newsletter will include business card size advertisements of local businesses for a year (six bi-monthly issues) for \$60.00. Please send a copy of your business card and a check for \$60.00 payable to 'Town of Gill' to Barbara Watson, 143 River Road, Gill, MA 01354. If you would like to make a contribution to help us meet expenses in a very tight budget, we would also welcome such contributions mailed to the above address.

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

March 15th for the April Issue.

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