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Town Hall News

Winter Parking Ban

With snowy, wintry weather finally upon us, please remember that there is no onstreet parking allowed anywhere in Gill between the hours of 1 AM and 6 AM from November 1 to April 15. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Special Town Meeting Results

Approximately 30 voters, including several new faces (Welcome!), attended the January 17 Special Town Meeting and in 15 minutes efficiently tended to the five articles on the warrant. Voters agreed to transfer \$800 from the County Dog Fund to the Library budget, a matter that had been inadvertently omitted from the Annual Town Meeting last year. Voters also unanimously accepted a section of the Massachusetts General Laws that will allow Saturdays not to be counted in determining when voter registrations must be held and when tax bills are due.

In Article 3 voters unanimously approved a combination of borrowing, appropriation, and transfers totaling \$55,000 to fund a boiler replacement and steam-to-forced hot water conversion project at the Public Safety Complex. A second article dealing with the boiler replacement project was passed over as it became redundant after funding was approved.

The fifth and final article asked voters to

adopt a new zoning by-law to allow for ground-mounted solar electric installations in designated locations through byright provisions rather than requiring a special permit. The area covered is north of Route 2 going west from Chappell Drive and then up Main Road to the bus garage. The article was approved 23-3, exceeding the 2/3 requirement for modifying zoning by-laws. Adopting the by-law also satisfies one of the state's five requirements for a town to receive Green Community Certification.

The five requirements that must be met in order to apply for Green Community Designation and receive grant funds are: Provide as-of-right siting in designated locations for renewable/alternative energy generation (met by the just-passed Solar Electric Installation by-law); Adopt an expedited application and permit process for as-of-right energy facilities; Establish an energy use baseline and develop a plan to reduce energy use by twenty percent (20%) within five (5) years; Purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles



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



for municipal use whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable; and Set requirements to minimize life-cycle energy costs for new construction (met by the adoption of the Stretch Building Code in 2010).

Boiler Replacement at Public Safety Complex

With funding now in place, the Town is currently advertising and seeking bids for the replacement of the 33-year-old oil-fired steam boiler at the Public Safety Complex. Currently, the older section of the building is heated by steam and the newer section by forced hot water, both provided by the aged, leaking boiler. The plan is to convert the steam zones to forced hot water. which is a more efficient method of delivering heat to the building. Also, instead of one large boiler, two smaller boilers will be installed to provide better reliability and redundancy, and improved fuel efficiency during the more temperate months leading into and coming out of winter. Bids are due February 8, and the replacement will occur at the end of this heating season.

Opening on the Conservation Commission

After more than eight years of service, Ted Castro-Santos resigned from the Conservation Commission. Ted's commitment, passion, and experience will be greatly missed, and the Town thanks him for all

of his hard work and dedication to Gill's waterways and wetlands.

Any Gill resident who might be interested in joining the Conservation Commission is encouraged to contact one of the other members to learn more about the responsibilities it entails. You may find their names on the website, www.gillmass.org.

New Decorative Fence at West Gill Cemetery

As this is the first newsletter since the work was completed, we need to point out the new wrought iron fence along the Hoe Shop Road side of the West Gill Cemetery. The fence was donated by Theodora Kelley of Shelburne Falls, the project was championed by Gill's Ted Graveline, and installation was done by the Highway Department. Hardware and incidental costs related to the new fence were paid for by the Friends of Gill. We offer a round of thanks to everyone involved in this project.

Regional Dog Kennel:

In December the Selectboard voted to have the Town become a member of a new dog kennel program being started by the Franklin County Sheriff's Office. For several years Gill had been without a kennel to house loose dogs and strays picked up by the Police Department. The regional dog kennel is located in Montague and will be providing

services to Gill and 11 other towns. It is expected to become operational in late February or March, and the Sheriff's Office will be providing a trained animal control officer to run the program. Jail inmates will also be involved in caring for kenneled dogs.

Pump Replacement at Riverside Sewer Pump Station

Last July the Selectboard awarded to R. H. White Construction of Auburn, MA, a \$46,000 project to replace the two 30+ years-old pumps that transfer sewage from the Riverside sewer system under the Connecticut River and into the Montague sewers where it goes on to be treated. The new pumps had a very long lead-time and have now finally been received from the manufacturer. Installation is scheduled to begin at the end of January and is expected to last 2-3 weeks. The pumps will be replaced one at a time, so there should be no disruption of service to sewer users. The project was funded using money repaid to the Franklin Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority for housing rehabilitation loans made from Community Development Block Grant awards.

Nature's Trick-or-Treat

The amount of damage caused by the heavy, wet snow that blanketed Gill on October 29-30 was certainly unexpected and unwelcome. At one



point 100% of the town was without electricity, and most homes and businesses endured 2 - 5 days with no power. However, compared to other areas in New England, power restoration to Gill and its surrounds was relatively timely. Counting labor, overtime, materials, fuel, equipment, and repairs, \$33,000 is a preliminary estimate of the Fire, Police, and Highway Departments' expenses during and after the storm. This total would have been much higher, but Gill received several days of free assistance from a tree crew provided by the Erving State Forest and another crew provided by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). Inmates from the Community Service program at the Franklin County Jail assisted several days with chipping limbs and brush.

The President has declared the snow event a "Major Disaster," which will allow the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to reimburse towns for 75% of their storm-related expenses. The initial briefing to explain the reimbursement process was held on January 20.

From a Town perspective, we are fortunate this extended power outage occurred during the seasonable temperatures of October and not during the dead of winter. Except for the Public Safety Complex and the Riverside Sewer Pump Station building, no other town-owned buildings are wired to be powered

by generators. Like many Gill homeowners, the Town will be exploring options in order to be better prepared for the next extended power outage.

Please extend a very big Thank You! to all of our Public Safety workers for their long hours, hard work, and dedication to Gill and its residents, not just during this storm but every day of the year.

Other Disaster Reimbursements

During Tropical Storm Irene last August the Town expended \$13,291 on storm-related labor, materials, and equipment use. FEMA will reimburse 75% - \$9,968. In what seems like a record turnaround, the Town has already received \$5,172 of the total. We have also applied for a reimbursement of \$767 for firefighter wages incurred providing mutual aid to the Town of Wilbraham immediately following the June 2011 tornado.

Open Space & Recreation Plan

Keep an eye on the Town's website (www.gillmass.org) for in-process and final drafts of the updated Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP). This document will aid the Town in continuing to plan for future growth and protection of our natural, scenic, cultural, and historic resources - all the things that make Gill a special place to live. The Open Space Advisory Committee is desperately

in need of more members to help implement some of the action items from the plan. If you are interested, contact Ray Purington at 863-9347.

Ray Purington, Administrator Assistant

From the Town Clerk

Town Census Forms

January 2012 began with a mailing from the Town Clerk's office for the 2012 census update. I ask that you please respond with your completed form as soon as possible. Thank you to residents who have already returned their surveys.

Dog Licenses

The census mailing also gives the opportunity to license dogs by mail. We have 70 dogs licensed so far, and this is very good progress for mid-January. Keep in mind that a rabies clinic will be held on March 24 at the Northfield Fire Station from 9 AM to noon. I will be there to license dogs at the same time.

The Presidential Primary

will be March 6, 2012 at the Gill Fire Station, 196A Main Road from 7 AM to 8 PM.

The deadline to apply for an absentee ballot for the Presidential Primary is noon on March 5, 2012. You may vote absentee if you are unable to vote at the polls on election day due to (1) absence from



Gill during normal polling hours, (2) physical disability prevents you from going to your polling place; or (3) religious belief. To vote absentee, contact the Town Clerk to arrange a time to vote at the Town Hall.

Voter Registration

The deadline to register to vote or change your political party for the 2012 Presidential Primary is 8 PM on Wednesday, February 15, 2012. A special voter registration session will be held at the Town Clerk's office until 8 PM for persons who are not currently registered to vote; however, you may register any time before the deadline at the Town Clerk's office.

To register to vote, you must be a U.S. citizen, a resident of Gill, and at least 18 years old on or before the town meeting or election. You may register in person or by mail (postmarked no later than the final registration date).

Annual Town Meeting

The opening of the Annual Town Meeting is May 7, 2012, Monday evening at 7 PM at Town Hall. The deadline to register to vote at the Annual Town Meeting is 8 PM on Tuesday, April 17, 2012.

Annual Town Election: The Annual Town Election will be held on May 21, 2012 from noon to 8 PM at 196A Main Road, the Town Municipal Building and Fire Station. The deadline for voter registration to vote at the Annual Town Election

will be at the Town Clerk's office by 8 PM on Tuesday May 1, 2012.

The offices on the ballot this year:

Selectboard, Sewer Commissioner, three year term, currently held by John Ward.

Moderator, three year term, vacant

Assessor, three year term, currently held by Nancy Griswold.

Cemetery Commission, three year term, currently held by Patricia Haigis.

Tree Warden, three year term, currently held by Ernest Hastings.

Board of Health, three year term, currently held by Randy Crochier.

Library Trustee, three year term, currently held by Ellen Johnson.

Town Clerk, three year term, currently held by Lynda Hodsdon Mayo.

Nomination papers are available at the Town Clerk's office. Twenty-five signatures of Gill registered voters are necessary to run for office. The last day to submit nomination papers to the town clerk is 5 PM on April 2, 2012.

Town Clerk Office hours are Monday-Thursday 1 PM to 4 PM, Monday evening 5:30-6:30 PM, and other times by appointment. (413-863-8103)

From the Board of Assessors' Office

The Department of Revenue certified the numbers presented by the Board of Assessors for FY2012 and set a final tax rate of \$14.55. This is

based on sales in Gill during 2009 and 2010 and the assessed values reflected on January 1, 2011. Tax bills have been sent out with a due date of 5 PM on April 2, 2012. This date becomes the deadline for Abatement Applications or Exemption Applications submitted for Assessors' determination. These applications may be found at the Gill web site.

The Board of Assessors has sent out Form of List questionnaires to be returned by March 1, 2012 to document all Personal Property subject to taxation in the Town of Gill.

The Board of Assessors are also continuing to work in the community to record project progress up to the January 1, 2012 deadline date that becomes the basis of all the assessments for the 2013 tax bills.

Assessors' Clerk office hours are Monday through Thursday, 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM. The Board of Assessors meets alternate Monday evenings, at 6:30 PM. (413-863-0138)

From the Tax Collector and Treasurer

The 2012 Real Estate & Personal Property Taxes were mailed to homeowners and businesses on December 30, 2011. If you have a mortgage in an escrow account, please forward a copy of your bill to the lender. Payment is due on or before April 2, 2012. Anyone



who has not received a bill, should please contact the Collector's Office at 413-863-2105.

Anyone who has unpaid taxes for prior years is alerted that the Tax Collector will be printing in the local newspaper the name of the owner & business as well as the amount owed.

Recreation Committee

Report on Fall Soccer Program

The Gill Recreation's Soccer Program had another successful season with four teams this fall. A senior team of 4th-6th graders, two junior teams of 2nd-4th graders, and a group of K-1st graders involved many Gill youth. The senior team consisted of ten players led by Patrick Garland. Coached by Rose Levasseur, Nate Duda and Andy Cole, the juniors were divided into two teams. The youngest team was led by several parents and volunteers. A special "thank you" goes to Tom Pratt and NMH for providing playing fields for all of our teams. Thank you also to Steve Streibel for all his help with the soccer program!

An Appeal

The Gill Recreation Committee is in desperate need of new members. For many, many years the committee has been anchored by long-time members Rose Lavasseur and Nate Duda. In recent years they were joined by Cathy Demars Ambo and Debbie Loomer. The committee has worked hard to become fiscally responsible, and last year we held a dedication of the softball scoreboard in memory of Jasmin Edson. The Recreation Committee is now planning pro-actively for the future.

Unfortunately, the committee is already one person short, and with two of the committee members no longer able to serve, the committee now has only two remaining members. We have also had difficulty finding coaches for our teams. The same people are relied upon year after year, and it is only through their generosity that some of our programs still exist. If the Recreation program is going to continue, people must volunteer as committee members, coaches, and support personnel.



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No particular skills are necessary for membership on the committee; volunteers must be willing to meet once a month, assist in coordinating sport team sign-ups, help coordinate recreation events, and help make decisions concerning equipment purchases and inventory. Any help will be greatly appreciated. With the obesity of our youth becoming a societal health issue, it is imperative that we offer our children as many opportunities as we can to help give them an active lifestyle.

Contact Ray Purington or Deb Loomer if you are interested in volunteering for the Recreation Committee.

GILL FIRE DEPARTMENT

Brush Permit Season

Brush burning season runs from January 15 to May 1, 2012. Gill residents who wish to burn brush, sticks, or fallen tree limbs may apply for a permit online at www. fcburnpermits.com. Gill residents without computer access may call the regional dispatch center at 413-625-8200 to obtain a permit. Fires must be at least 75' 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 413-863-8955 if you need further information on burn permits.

Seeking New Members

The Gill Fire Department could always use more members, especially during the work day. The Fire Department provides the necessary equipment and training for new firefighters, who must be at least sixteen years of age. Preliminary training includes personal protective equipment, fire behavior, basic firefighting skills, first aid, and CPR and defibrillation. More advanced training opportunities in pump operation, hazardous materials response, rope and water rescue, emergency medical technology, and other areas are available throughout the year. Remember, a community's volunteer fire department is as good as the people who make it work. If you live in Gill and are physically up to the challenge of serving as a firefighter, we



may be looking for you. The Town of Gill is an equal-opportunity employer, and its emergency services personnel are subject to criminal background (CORI) checks. The Gill Fire Department meets each Thursday evening at the fire station from 7 to 10 PM. For more information, call the fire station at 413-863-8955.

Visible House Numbers Reduce Emergency Response Time

The Fire Department urges residents to make sure their house numbers are visible from the street. Winter weather and snow plows may have damaged some numbers. House numbers that are missing or difficult to read can increase response time in an emergency.

Chimney Fires

Many Gill families heat their homes with wood and should be aware of potential chimney fires. Most chimney fires occur because of a build-up of creosote, a tarry by-product of burning wood. Have your chimney flue cleaned before each heating season. You should burn only dry, well-seasoned hardwood to reduce the accumulation of creosote. Do not use flammable liquids to start a fire. Never leave children unattended near the stove. Check that the damper is open before lighting the fire. A closed damper will result in an accumulation of smoke and carbon monoxide in the home, so do not close the damper until the fire

is out and the embers are cold. Use a fireplace screen to prevent flying sparks and embers from falling out on to the floor. Install and maintain smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms to provide protection for your family.

Heating Systems and Carbon Monoxide:

Heating systems are the primary source of carbon monoxide in homes. Install smoke alarms to warn of a fire, but also have carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in the home to warn of deadly fumes from a faulty furnace, fireplace and oven flue, or other venting problem. Both types of residential alarms are required by law in Massachusetts.

Slate Library News

Winter has arrived and what better way to celebrate the season than to curl up with a good book! Slate Library has many new titles for everyone's enjoyment. Some new titles for adults include The Cat's Table by Michael Ondaatje, The Marriage Plot by Jeffrey Eugenides, Nanjing Requiem by Ha Jin, Steve Jobs by Walter Isaacson, and Rin Tin Tin by Susan Orlean. For young adults, we have *Dark Moon* by Tracy Barrett, The Mysterious Benedict Society: Mr. Benedict's Book of perplexing Puzzles, Elusive Enigmas and Curious Conundrums by Trenton Lee Stuart, and the latest from Wendelin Van Draanen, Sammy Keyes and the Night of the Skulls.

We have lots of lovely new picture books for the little ones as well as puzzles and kits in the children's room.

If you are interested in starting a book group or knitting group, consider using Slate Library as your gathering place. We encourage community members to use the library as a gathering place and resource for community activities. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Kudoes to a Gill College Student

Erika Loomer has been busy at Adelphi University where she is a senior majoring in Sports Management/Public Relations. She has been a member of the Adelphi Volleyball team for 4 years and this vear was selected as a co-captain. For the first time in the school's history, her team won the Northeast 10 – Division II – Conference Championship. Their opponents are primarily New England Schools such as Bentley College, Stonehill College, and UMass-Lowell. Erika is co-president of the Student Athletic Council, which coordinates community service activities such as a Habitat for Humanity Build and a mentoring program. Academically, she has been on the Dean's List for the past six semesters. She was chosen to be one of only 100 participants to participate in a NCAA Sport and Entertainment Summit held in Los Angeles and later was



selected to participate in another NCAA Conference on Careers in Sports Management in Indianapolis. She will graduate in May 2012.

School News

Honor Roll

Turners Falls High School First Quarter

Grade 12

Third Honors: Seth Lemieux

Grade 11

First Honors: Katelyn Dodge

Second Honors: Jonathan Marguet, Timothy

Meyer and Brittany York

Third Honors: Ceara Dolhenty and Nala Vaughn

Grade 10

Second Honors: Elliott Bertini Franseen and

Tyler Richardson

Grade 9

First Honors: Alexander Morin

Second Honors: Zachary Demars, Jessica Gaines, Spencer Hubert, Stephanie Robertson and Nicholas York

Third Honors: Lexi Griffin

Franklin County Technical School Trimester 1

Grade 11

Abigayle Virgilio

Grade 10

Shelbi Williams

Grade 9

Ryan Bezio

Great Falls Middle School

Grade 8

First Honors: Fallyn Adams and Mackenzie

Phillips

Second Honors: Krystal Cloutier, Nadia

Hasan and Alexander Lindgren

Grade 7

First Honors: Gabrielle Arzuaga, Tahner Castine, Bryn Kruzlic and Kate Sprankle Second Honors: Kaili Lynch and Nicholas Morin

Grade 6

First Honors: David Tricolici Third Honors: James Vaughn

More news

Nala Vaughn, a junior at Turners Falls High School, was named to the Sunday Republican's Fall All-Scholastic Girls' Soccer, Division III, Second Team. She was the only Turners Falls High School soccer player selected this year.

Gill Historical Commission

The Gill Historical Commission (GHC) meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 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, Lynda Hodsdon Mayo, or Pam Shoemaker.

Gill School Project

If you have pictures or stories from the Gill School Houses, please share them with us. If you have pictures, we will scan or copy them. Also, we are looking for early tinted pictures of the Riverside School building so that we can determine the original paint colors.

Slate Library History

Have you wondered about why Slate Library, built in 1921 and named in honor of Prentice Slate, is constructed with cement blocks? Working with Bonnie Parsons, Preservationist with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, the GHC now has a comprehensive description of the history of this cement block building. The following is excerpted from the PVPC document:

How the Prentice Slate Memorial Library architect was selected is not clear, but the town's choice was Joseph Randolph Coolidge of the firm Coolidge and Carlson in Boston. Coolidge and Carlson was a firm known throughout New England for its commercial buildings, college buildings, homes and churches; the commission came towards the end of its period of activity when its reputation was well-established. Joseph Coolidge had actually retired from the firm by 1921, but he continued to take on projects. It was he who drew the plans, and according to "Records and Memoires" by William Boyle whose daughter Helen was librarian at the time, Coolidge planned and personally supervised the library's construction.





Prepare a dish using ingredients from Gill (or other local) farmers and join us!

GILL LOCAL-VORE POTLUCK SUPPER

Friday, Feb. 10 6:30 p.m.

Gill Congregational Church

Main Road, Gill Center (across from the Gill Tavern)

Bring a dish made with local ingredients (eggs, milk, flour, grain, fruit, vegetables, meat, etc.) to share with others.

Optional: if you'd like, list the local ingredients you've used.

All are welcome; free of charge!

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Coolidge was the great-great grandson of Thomas Jefferson. His parents were attorney Joseph Randolph and Julia Gardner Coolidge. Joseph, Jr., graduated from Harvard in 1884 and from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1890. He spent the next four years at Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris and returned to Boston to form the firm Coolidge and Wright in 1901. He and Henry J. Carlson formed the firm Coolidge and Carlson shortly thereafter. Their firm survived until Carlson's death in 1957.

Like other of Boston's most respected architectural firms, Coolidge and Carlson designed buildings that reflected the progressive ideas of their time. They incorporated the latest in technology with designs that showed their appreciation of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright's modern movement, the Art Nouveau style, as well as with the current stylistic revivals, Shingle Style, Colonial Revival, and Classical Revival, among others. The firm's progressive attitudes hold the key to the appearance of Slate Library and its construction in concrete block. As possibly the only concrete block library in Massachusetts designed in the first two decades of the 1900's, Slate Memorial is not a commonplace building.

We know that from the first decade of the 20th century, concrete had begun growing in popularity as a fireproof building material in response to the great fires in San Francisco, Baltimore, and Toronto. Meanwhile, steel frame construction in Chicago in the latter part of the 19th century had been spreading to cities elsewhere in the country. In Boston, according to architectural historian Douglas Shand-Tucci, concrete and concrete block were introduced by architect Frank A. Bourne who built more than one concrete block church, including St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Chelsea in 1908. Bourne was a proponent of concrete for its fireproof qualities, but also for its economy and the way in which it met the principles of the Craftsman movement being a material that could be local, hand-produced, and illustrate minimal ornament. In Craftsman magazine in 1909 he wrote about its application to multi-family housing following those principles. Frank Bourne and Joseph Coolidge had more than a pass-



ing acquaintance as Boston architects as they collaborated in 1909 on a book on the architectural orders with a third architect, Frank Chouteau Brown. Their respective architectural ideas would have been known to each other, and it is against this shared background that Joseph Coolidge designed the Slate Library. Fire safety, economy, a design with minimal ornament in locally-made materials, fairly summarize the design impulses. That these design principles coincided with a small town in need of a secure library but offering a limited budget may explain much about the building.

The fact that the firm followed up in Watertown in 1922 with a concrete block gas station for Beacon Oil Company designed to resemble the Boston State House makes it clear that Coolidge and Carlson were at least temporarily committed to working with the technology of cement block construction and using it in a Colonial Revival style. Joseph Coolidge died in 1928 and Harry Carlson in 1957. When the firm was closed, its records were offered to clients, and this may explain how the town has retained a copy of Joseph Coolidge's plans, sections, and elevations of the Prentice Slate Memorial Library at the library and at the historical collection at Riverside.

NMH Green Cup Challenge

February is the month of the annual Northfield Mount Hermon Green Cup Challenge. This event has a category in which the dormitories compete in saving energy and a category in which households (day student families and faculty/staff households) compete to reduce their electrical consumption and, therefore, their emission of greenhouse gasses. The competition relies on the generosity of the community to donate prizes.

GILL CRAFT FAIR 2012

Mark your calendars for September 15 and 16 at the Riverside School on Route 2.



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NEXT GILL NEWSLETTER

Copy for the next newsletter should be sent to pshoe27@gmail.com no later than March 22.

The approximate mailing date is March 30.



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.

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.

The costs of mailing the newsletter have increased so that our budget is very tight. If you would like to make a contribution to help us meet expenses, we would appreciate your sending a check, payable to "Town of Gill", to Barbara Watson, 143 River Road, Gill, MA 01354.

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