



THE

Gill Newsletter

Winter 2020 Issue

Disclaimer:

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Comcast Internet Essentials

Qualified low-income households are eligible to participate in Internet Essentials from Comcast. The program provides high-speed Internet service for \$9.95 a month plus tax, the option to purchase a desktop or laptop computer for \$149.99 and access to free digital literacy training in print, online, and in person. Individuals may qualify if they have at least one child who is eligible for the National School Lunch Program, or if they receive public assistance through such programs as housing assistance, Medicaid, SNAP, SSI, and others. Those wishing to apply can call 1-855-846-8376 or visit www.InternetEssentials.com.

Job Opening: Administrative Clerk

(Part Time)

The Town is again accepting applications for the Administrative Clerk position, with a plan to fill the position this winter. It is part-time, averaging 15 hours per week, with a rate of \$17.94/hour. Attendance at some evening meetings is required.

The Administrative Clerk provides support and assistance to the Town Administrator, Board of Health, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), Conservation Commission, and other Town Boards and Departments as directed by the Town Administrator,

A partial list of responsibilities includes: compile Annual Town Reports; attend evening meetings of the ZBA

and Planning Board and take and transcribe meeting minutes; prepare and collate handouts for meetings; provide customer service in person and on the telephone and respond to inquiries regarding town services; organize and file all records for Board of Health, Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board; update information on town website; and prepare articles for the newsletter and local newspapers. Excellent writing abilities and attention to details are important skills for the successful applicant to possess.

Qualified Gill residents are encouraged to apply. A complete job description and application form are available at Town Hall and online at www.gillmass.org/jobs. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Public Forum on Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan

Gill's public safety officials and representatives from local businesses and public agencies, with assistance from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, have updated the Town's Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Plan is used to identify threats and

Check in with the Gill Website

www.gillmass.org
for up to date news,
announcements and
contact information!



risks to our community created by natural hazards such as flooding, wind, extreme winter weather, drought, climate change, and invasive species. Included in the Plan are action items and long-term strategies to reduce the impacts of disasters on people, property, infrastructure, and the environment.

There will be a public forum to review and accept comments on the Plan on Tuesday, February 18th at 6:00 PM. The forum will be held on the second floor of Town Hall as part of the Selectboard’s meeting that night. All are welcome to attend.

Winter Parking Ban

Just a reminder, the winter parking ban is in effect through April 15. There is NO on-street parking allowed between the hours of 1 AM and 6 AM. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Winter Sand for Driveways

The Highway Department keeps a pile of winter sand (sand & salt mix) at the Public Safety Complex (196 Main Road) for Gill residents who need a few buckets for driveways and walkways. Use the driveway on the left (Fire Department side of the building), and look for the pile behind the building, off to the left. The pile may not be used by snow removal companies and other private contractors.

Fred W. Wells Trust Scholarship Applications for 2019-2020 Fred

W. Wells Trust scholarships are now available at the Town Hall, as well as at area high school guidance offices. Scholarships are available to graduating seniors and full-time college students who have resided in Gill (and other eligible towns) for at least two years immediately before application. The completed applications must be postmarked on or before March 20th.

Tax Bills

The second tax bill for FY20 will be mailed early February. Residents are reminded that tax bills are not sent to mortgage companies. It is your responsibility to notify your mortgage company and ensure an on-time payment. If you use your bank’s online bill payment to send a check, be sure to include the Bill # as part of the memo line.

If you mail in your tax payment, include the bottom tear-off portion of the bill, and write the Bill # on the memo line of your check. If you wish to have a receipt of payment, be sure to enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

*Thank you,
Tom Hodak, Tax Collector*

From the Town Clerk

The Town Clerk’s office is looking forward to an active election year. The presidential primary will be held March 3rd, local elections on May 18th, state primaries are scheduled for September 1st, and the year will end with the presidential and state elections on November 3rd. The town is always looking

for election workers; if anyone is interested in working the elections, please call the Town Clerk. This is a great way to contribute to our community and get to know your fellow “Gillbillies”.

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/election. You may register in person or by mail (postmarked no later than the final registration date).

March 3, 2020

**Presidential Primary:
7PM – 8PM**

- **2/12/2020
Last Day to Register to
Vote/Make Changes to
Voter Registration**
- **2/24/2020 – 2/27/2020
Early voting hours
Monday 1 – 4PM,
Tuesday 1 – 4PM,
Wednesday 1 – 4PM,
Thursday 1 – 6PM**

May 18, 2020

**Annual Town Election
12 – 8PM**

- **4/28/2020
Last Day to Register to
Vote/Make Changes to
Voter Registration**
- **THERE IS NO EARLY
VOTING FOR THIS
ELECTION**

September 1, 2020

State Primary

November 3, 2020

State/Presidential Election



Please remember to send back your census forms and make any changes necessary. The census information is important for a number of reasons: it keeps your voter status active and gives emergency services/911 information about number of people in your home. This can be critical in case of fire or other emergencies.

Dog licenses are available in the Clerk's Office.

Doreen Stevens, Town Clerk
Office hours:

Monday 9AM to 4PM

Tuesday 9AM to 1PM

Wednesday 9AM to 3PM

Thursday 3PM to 5PM

Other times by appointment.
413-863-8103

Board of Assessors

The assessors presented the data and recommendations for the 2020 tax rate to the Select Board at a Classification Hearing during a Select Board meeting on January 21st, 2020. The Select Board approved the recommendations.

Gill's 2020 tax rate will remain at a single rate.

The total 2020 taxable valuation:

Real Estate: \$154,401,178.00

Personal Property: \$8,724,000.00

Total: \$163,125,178.00

The tax rate is \$17.25 per \$1,000, based on property valuation on January 1, 2019. A fair market value on sales was derived from analysis using sales from July 2017 through June 2019. If you have any questions please contact the

Assessors' office Monday through Thursday from 9 AM to 12:30 PM at 863-0138.

The Board also presented two Articles at the Special Town Meeting that was held on January 22, 2020 to ask residents to vote in support of a tax settlement agreement with Firstlight Hydro Generation. Both motions passed.

The Board of Assessors will be sending out a Form of List to be returned by March 1, 2020 to document values for all Personal Property subject to taxation in the Town of Gill.

The Board of Assessors is also continuing to work in the community to record project progress up to the January 1, 2020, deadline date that becomes the base of all the assessments for the FY2021 tax bills.

Board of Assessors
William Tomb, Chair
Pamela Lester
Tim Storrow

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Susan LaScala 863-2435

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Gill Fire Department

Fire Department Sign Project

The Gill Fire Department is about 75% done with the house numbering project. We have completed all roads north of Route 2, and hope to have the rest done after the snow is gone and ground thaws. We have Route 2, all side roads and Riverside remaining. Remember that these signs must remain visible from both directions of travel at all times of the year. Please take the extra time to remove the snow from the signs. We have received many compliments on these signs from other emergency services.

Burn Permits:

Burning season started on January 15th and runs through May 1st. Burning brush requires a permit and can only be done during burning season. The fire department participates in the Franklin County Burning online permit program. Permits can be obtained via computer or smartphone. Using this online program reduces the call volume at Shelburne Control, and frees up the dispatchers to take 911 calls. If there is a major incident going on in the county you may be put on hold until a dispatcher is available. The website address is <http://www.fcburnpermits.com/>. Those who do not have internet access can call Shelburne Control at 625-8200.

Please remember that if weather conditions are not favorable due to wind, dry conditions and environmental air quality, permits will not be issued. The same is true if the

State DEP advises that meteorological conditions exist that would make burning unfavorable.

Permits are valid for only the day they are issued and are not issued in advance due to the potential for change in weather conditions. Permits may be obtained between the hours of 8:30 AM and 1 PM on days when permits are being issued.

Complete brush burning regulations are available from the permits website.

Smoke and CO Alarms

The winter heating season is a good time to make sure you have working smoke alarms on every level of your home — outside bedrooms, at the top of open stairs, and at the base of cellar stairs. Be sure to maintain your smoke alarms and test them once a month. If the alarm uses regular batteries, change them at least once a year. An easy way to remember this is to change the batteries when you change your clocks. A “chirping” sound indicates that it’s time to change the batteries. All smoke alarms must be replaced every ten years. Alarms are labeled with their date of manufacture. If there is no label, they are older than ten years and must be replaced immediately. Keep in mind that even large amounts of smoke may not wake a sleeping person. Check and maintain your smoke alarms on a regular basis.

Carbon monoxide (CO) exposure can pose a significant health risk in your home. Symptoms commonly include headache, dizziness,

weakness, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. Prolonged exposure can lead to unconsciousness and even death. Since carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless gas, Massachusetts law requires carbon monoxide alarms to be installed on every level of your 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. Replace carbon monoxide alarms every five to seven years, depending on the make and model. Newer CO alarms have a ten-year sealed battery that does not need changing, but after ten years, the entire device must be replaced. If you have a plug-in model, be aware that the battery will run down during extended power outages and may need to be replaced.

Chimney Fires

Did you know that most chimney fires go undetected? Creosote, a by-product of combustion, can build up in chimneys and cause serious damage to your home and injure its occupants. A loud popping or cracking noise, a sound of rushing air, dense smoke, or an intense, hot odor can indicate a chimney fire. Flames or dense smoke may shoot from the chimney. Be sure to call 911 if you think you might be having a chimney fire, but prevention of these fires is possible. Have your chimney and wood stove inspected and cleaned at least once each year by a professional. While burning, avoid conditions that lead to creosote buildup, like a restricted air supply, burning unseasoned or



wet wood, or cooler than normal chimney temperatures. Dispose of ashes in a metal container outside and away from your home. Keep your chimney, and your family, safe this winter.

Gill Firefighters Association Scholarship

Each year, the Gill Firefighters Association awards a scholarship of \$500.00 to a Gill resident who will graduate in June 2020 from an accredited area secondary school and plans to attend college. The scholarship is dedicated to the memory of Firefighter Stanley Ambo (1928-1980), who gave his last full measure of devotion in the line of duty. One scholarship will be given to a member of the senior class who demonstrates scholastic ability, need, character, and participation in extra-curricular and community activities. Any award shall be contingent upon the selected applicant's acceptance into a post-secondary academic program. Scholarship applications are available in the guidance departments of local high schools and online at www.gillmass.org. Completed applications are due by April 1, 2020.

Flu News

As of late January, national levels of flu-like illness remain high and have been elevated for eleven weeks. It is too early to know whether the season has peaked or whether flu activity will continue to increase through the next several months. Some good news is that the current flu vaccine covers all strains that are

circulating so far this season (B - which hits kids harder than A - is dominant). Throughout flu season (October-May) the Massachusetts Department of Public Health publishes a Weekly Flu Report (available at www.mass.gov) indicating the impact of flu-like illness. Frequent hand washing and getting an annual flu shot are the two best ways to avoid getting sick. Each October for the past number of years, School Nurse Carol Varner has collaborated with the Board of Health as members of the Cooperative Public Health Service of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), Greenfield Community College's nursing program, Franklin County Medical Reserve Corps and dedicated town volunteers like Ronnie LaChance to offer community flu clinics held at Gill Elementary School. This year 85 Gill residents were protected from flu, including 27 kids and their parents. Residents are invited to all FRCOG's clinics, during regular town nurse hours at Stoughton Place 9 - 11 a.m. the second Friday of the month, and at senior centers throughout the county where high dose flu vaccine is offered. Home visits are available. There is no fee - only your insurance card is needed. If you haven't already received your flu vaccine, please plan to join us this year! The entire clinic schedule is accessed at www.frcog.org by link on the Gill website. Need more information? Please contact FRCOG Regional Public Health Nurse Lisa White at 413-665-1400 x 114 or at lwhite@frcog.org



66 French King Highway
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Slate Library News

Lots of exciting things are happening at Slate Library this winter. We have a new children's librarian, Margaret Youngberg, who works Wednesday afternoons and Friday mornings, and will host a story hour at 10:00 a.m. Stop by, say hello and check out the new picture and chapter books for kids. Margaret will be hosting a Valentine card-crafting party on Wednesday, February 12 at 3:30 p.m. All are welcome. Come and create a Valentine for someone you love.



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In addition to many new titles and DVDs, the library now has an electronic library ready to be checked out. Some electronic items include video cameras, trail cameras, projectors and laptops. Come in and try out a new device! (You must be 18 or older, show photo ID with a current address, and sign an agreement to borrow equipment.) We welcome feedback on these new items and what additions you would like to see in our collection.

For older Gill residents who might be homebound or have transportation issues, we now have a volunteer, Kim Sprankle, who will deliver books, magazines, and/or DVDs to your home. If you would like a delivery, please call the Slate Library at 863-2591 and leave a detailed message that includes your name, phone number, address, and the titles of books, magazines, and/or DVDs that you would like to be checked out in your name and delivered to you. Magazine titles include: *Time, People, National Geographic, Cook's Illustrated, Domino, Vanity Fair, Discover, Country Living, Yankee*, and *Massachusetts Wildlife*. The library staff will compile the items, check them out to you, and contact Kim to make the delivery. If you have any questions please get in touch with Kim at 863-2975.

Library hours are Tuesday 2- 6 pm, Wednesday 3 -7 pm, Thursday 2-8 pm and Saturday 10 - 2 pm.

Enjoy the wintery weather and snuggle up with a good book!

HONOR ROLL

Deans' List

Chelsea Parzych was named to the Dean's List at Keene State College in Keene, NH for the fall 2019 semester. Chelsea is a freshman majoring in Early Childhood Education. She was a 2019 graduate of Four Rivers Charter School and was awarded the Gill Firemen's Association Scholarship and the Fred W. Wells Trust Scholarship.

Pioneer Valley Regional School 1st Quarter

Grade 10

High Honor: Isaac Damon

Grade 9

High Honor: James Staelens

Turners Falls High School 1st Quarter

Grade 11

First Honors: Leah Timberlake, Hailey Wheeler and Olivia Whittier
Third Honors: Taylor Murphy

Grade 10

First Honors: Hannah Marchefka

Grade 9

Second Honors: Anna Baskowski

Great Falls Middle School 1st Quarter

Grade 8

First Honors: Owen LaValley and Regan Marshall
Second Honors: Otilia Bartolon

Grade 7

First Honors: Maren Batchelder
Second Honors: Levi Halla, Josiah Little and Zachary Zilinski

Grade 6

First Honors: Lincoln Coleman
Third Honors: Emma Little



Memorial Committee

The Memorial Committee is organizing a Memorial Day program that honors the sacrifice of those wearing our country's uniform and WWII veterans in particular. This year is the 75th anniversary of the end of the war. Ideas for honoring veterans include recognizing surviving vets and/or their families as honored participants. We are also hoping to collect photographs, medals and insignia, uniforms, flags and other memorabilia, in order to display them at the church around the time of event. Our hope is that the community will be able to provide such items or ideas on how we might honor those often referred to as the Greatest Generation. We will begin at the church at 10 a.m. on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend as is our custom, and continue across the road to the Veterans' Memorial. The latest consideration is to show the 1941 Abbott and Costello hit movie, *Buck Privates*, outdoors on that Saturday evening, weather permitting, or in the church basement.

We would also like to invite Gill residents to the second annual reading of the Declaration of Independence from the Gill Church steps on July 4, followed by the ringing of the bell (244 peals). We begin promptly at noon. Anyone wishing to participate in reading should arrive before the ceremonies begin to receive their section and instructions for the reading.

Chet Kuzontkoski 863-9284

Doug & Elaine Smith 863-3115

Gary & Merri Bourbeau 863-8613

Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Services

- Veterans' Services has new town visitation list - see below. Fixed outreach hours remain the same, but we have added scheduled towns halls for short visits. These changes go into effect March 1.
- We now have a trained SHINE counselor on staff. Laura Thorne will begin meeting with any veteran or dependent of a veteran in our district to review health care programs. This will begin April 1. Call 1-413-772-1572 for pre-screening and to make appointments with Laura.
- A new federal law allows "Blue Water Navy Veterans" who served within 12 miles of Vietnam to file or re-file for Agent Orange-related diseases. Call our office to review and discuss steps forward. 1-413-772-1571
- As always, veterans and their dependents are encouraged to call or visit us at one of our outreach locations to review benefits.

Main Office: 294 Main Street Greenfield.

Hours: Mondays – Fridays
8:30AM to 5PM

For those unable to get to the office during regular hours due to scheduling or transportation issues, you can meet with your agent by appointment in your home or a mutually agreeable location.

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Monthly At The Senior Center

Gill Montague COA Meetings

12:45 PM on 1st Tuesdays:
Feb. 4

Brown Bags

10:30 to Noon. 1st Thursdays:
Jan. 2, Feb. 6, March 5
(No Tai Chi or Chair Yoga on Brown Bag Days)

Foot Clinics

(by appointment 8 – 9:15 AM)
on 2nd and 3rd Mondays.
Jan. 13 and 20,
Feb. 10 and 17;
March 9 and 16
Cost \$5.00 with funding by
COA & EOE.

Friends of the Senior Center Meetings:

11:30 on 2nd Wednesdays:
Jan. 8, Feb. 12, March 11

Pot Lucks & Movie

at Noon 3rd Mondays:
Jan. 20, Feb. 17, March 16

Pizza Parties

12 Noon on First Fridays:
Jan. 3, Feb. 7, March 6
(\$3.00). Sign up 2 days
before.

Every Week:

Lunch Tuesday-Thursday at
Noon. Sign up by 11 AM the
day before: Suggested \$3.00
donation.

Satellite locations and hours:

Montague Senior Center:
1st & 3rd Weds. of every month
9AM-11AM

Erving Senior Center:
1st Wednesday of every month
1PM-3PM

Bernardston Senior Center:
4th Monday of every month
3PM-4PM

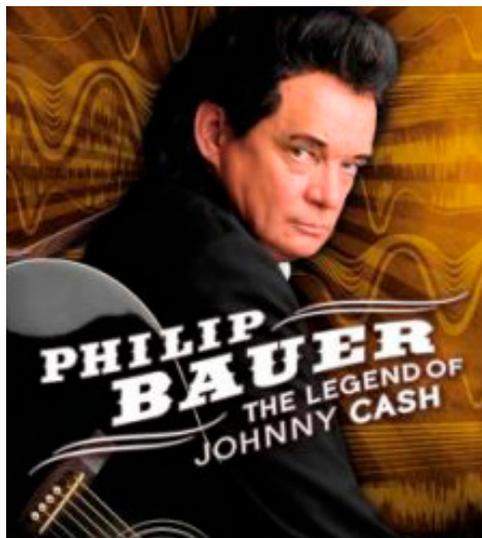
Northfield Town Hall:
4th Tuesday of every month
9AM-11AM

*Chris Demars, Deputy Director
Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans'
Services*

1-413-772-1571 fax 1-413-772-1401

2020 GMEF Annual Gala "The Legend of Johnny Cash"

Featuring tribute artist Philip Bauer



On Saturday, April 25, 2020 @
7:00pm, at the Gill-Montague
Education Fund Annual Gala
Philip Bauer brings the sound
and charisma of "The Man in
Black" to life with "The Legend of

Johnny Cash." At this 90-minute stage show, backed by his four-piece touring band, Philip Bauer performs Cash's songs in the casual, seemingly-effortless way that made "The Man in Black" such an important musical icon. Some of the songs featured in the show are "I Walk the Line," "A Boy Named Sue," "Folsom Prison Blues" and "Ring Of Fire". Don't miss this incredible opportunity to relive the music and magic of the one and only Johnny Cash.

Advance tickets are \$25, are NOW available on the GMEF website. They will be available at various outlets on March 1st.

Visit our website: www.thegmef.org for updated information and to hear Philip Bauer.

Cultural Council Awards

The Gill Cultural Council met November 16 to decide how to spend this year's allotment of money from the state for community-based projects in arts, humanities and sciences.

Gill received grant applications from 13 individuals and organizations.

The LCC-sponsored events that Gill can look forward to in 2020:

- A trip to Pioneer Valley Symphony for 3rd graders.
- Franklin County Musicians Coop, Energy Park concerts, 1 concert in Turners Falls
- A Puppet Show at Greenfield Winter Carnival by Cheli Mennella



- Michael Nix Banjo concert at the Shea Theater, workshops, jams in Greenfield and Turners Falls
- Nolembeka Project- Massacre Remembrance Day in Turners Falls
- Da Camera Singers-Concert in Amherst, in praise of trees
- Sorrel Hatch monthly Farm to Table programs at Gill School
- Hilltown Families, Online family network
- Joan Stoia, “Authors and Artists” celebration in Northfield
- Racial Justice Rising, Monthly anti-racism programs in Greenfield
- Amy Gordon, After-school theater program at Gill and performances

For more information about the local cultural council program, go to www.mass-culture.org

Greetings from the Gill Energy Commission:

Energy Commissions exist around the country with the goal of reducing energy costs and replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy for both towns and individuals. The Town of Gill has saved money and energy by installing LED street lights, insulating buildings, and converting to heat pump heating systems in our public buildings.

The climate emergency is just one, although perhaps the most dire, of many environmental catastrophes facing our world. Our planet cannot support on a world-wide basis the lifestyles to which we

have become accustomed. We need to adjust to the idea that sooner rather than later we all will have to reduce our energy use, our consumption of goods and services, and the amount of waste we produce. We must learn and adopt lifestyles that are far more conservative of the planet’s limited and finite resources. These changes need to be focused on and adopted by all of us at the individual level because they are so necessary and also in order to build support for change at the local, state and national political levels.

The Gill Energy Commission seeks to provide suggestions for practical steps individuals can take to support human life on Earth. This is a topic we will continue to revisit in future Gill newsletters, and we welcome your questions, suggestions, and ideas to share with the community. You may reach the members of the Energy Commission using the email address: encom@gillmass.org.

For this issue we would like to introduce you to the web site of the Franklin County Solid Waste District: <http://www.franklin-countywastedistrict.org>. This site is impressive in its scope and detail. On the left side of the home page is a series of tabs for review, but begin with “Reduce, Reuse, and Buy Recycled”. Devote a good half hour to investigating the entire site; it is packed with good ideas and helpful suggestions. If you don’t have access to a computer, stop by Town Hall and leave a message in our mailbox. We will

make arrangements to share the information with you.

Make a resolution in this new year to look at your personal habits. Are you carrying your own bags to the store to avoid using plastic bags? Have you looked into the many ways you can purchase personal and household products in bulk, or maybe you choose the new ways some suppliers are providing goods without use of plastic? Are you allowing your car/truck engine to idle for prolonged periods (more than 30 seconds) when you are parked? Being conscious of your own habits is an important first step!

Windshield Washer Fluid

Have you ever noticed that skull and crossbones on a plastic jug of windshield washer fluid? This stuff that we all go through in great quantities, especially in the winter, is highly toxic. To keep it from freezing, methanol (methyl alcohol) is mixed with distilled water and a small amount of detergent and then sold for a huge profit. It is inexpensive to make but methanol is highly toxic to humans. In other words, we are not talking about just a hangover the next day. Methanol can cause blindness and if swallowed will do severe damage to the liver, kidneys and heart. *You* won’t drink it, of course, but if it spills and your pet licks it up, or a child thinks the pretty blue liquid is Kool-Aid — very serious! Even if it is used correctly to clean a windshield and eventually evaporates, the methanol doesn’t disap-



pear from the environment and is still considered a potent pollutant.

The good news: there are alternatives and the best one is to make this cleaning solution yourself. It is easy to do and you won't have a plastic jug to throw away. You may notice how this story relates to the Energy Commission's article about reducing plastic usage. You could call it this month's environmental theme and I could even be in cahoots with the Gill Energy Commission. But the point is, it is impossible to imagine how many thousands of empty plastic jugs of toxic washer fluid are discarded daily. The use of plastic in all its various forms is indeed a major theme that needs to be extended well beyond this newsletter.

But we all have to begin somewhere, so here is how to make windshield washer fluid at home. Start with distilled water (i.e. mineral-free so that wiper nozzles don't clog), but there is no need to buy a plastic jug of it. Just collect rainwater (or melt some snow) which, like distilled water, is the product of evaporation. That is how the minerals are removed! Science is so cool. Filter the water through a cloth to remove any sediment. Fill a 1 gallon container $\frac{3}{4}$ full with distilled water, add $1\frac{1}{2}$ cup of rubbing alcohol (most any alcohol will do, even vodka), and then 2 tablespoons of dish detergent. Some recipes suggest adding $\frac{1}{4}$ cup white vinegar. Be sure to label the container. Presto! Cheaper than buying it and, more importantly, non-toxic, with no

plastic jug to dispose of. In the warmer months you don't even need to add the alcohol which means you can reward yourself with a cold vodka tonic instead. Don't forget the lime! Cheers.

Yes, Alden Booth is a member of the Gill Energy Commission and probably spends too much time considering all the ways that we can have fantastic lives with less plastic, toxins, and fossil fuels in our daily routines. After all, humans have been doing it for thousands of years. Why can't we?

Historical Commission

Early Roads – Taken from Ralph M. Stoughton's GILL HISTORY, Vol. 1, Chapter 11.

In the early days of rural travel, country roads were generally cleared trails that followed easiest directions full of curves and sharp turns. They wandered hither and thither, up and down, guided by the obstacles encountered — skirting a swamp here, avoiding a boulder there, and climbing the sides of hills wherever ridges offered the readiest footholds. The first settlers built cabins on their lots wherever personal preference dictated, and roads in time evolved from the winding paths that connected these scattered homesteads.

Under the pen names of Julia Gill and Frances Lee, Urania and Frances Stoughton wrote in "Legends of New England":

"A good spring of water, close by the door, is such a handy thing," said Mrs. Risle. So Mr. Risle, who

had no pleasure but to please his wife, built [their] cabin by the spring.

"Whatever I have, I want plenty of fresh air; it makes a place so much healthier," said Mr. Darby. Therefore on a slightly hill he squared and spliced together the logs that made the walls of his home.

A sheltered spot, where his corn and rye would get an early start better met Mr. Davis's ideas of comfort. So his cabin was built where a wooded hill sloped down behind and at the sides, while a glimpse of the river showed beyond the clearing in front.

Thus each [one] built here and there, according to . . . taste and convenience, and thus the bridle paths, which first followed notched trees and finally broadened and hardened into roads, zig-zagged from one clearing to another, uphill and down, with no regard to the convenience or ease of travel but only democratically bent on giving every inhabitant an equal privilege in the advantage of a highway.

The roads that thus came into existence were at first community interests and were maintained by mutual agreements among the inhabitants of each district of the township. Only main thoroughfares were town or county roads,



and even those roads showed little consideration for convenience or speed of travel; nor were they always kept in good condition, if reliance can be put on statements in old letters in which their writers complained about the fatigue and slowness of journeys. It is even related how one farmer contemplating a trip to a neighboring city requiring a journey of several days, started out at midday with an oxen-team loaded with produce, and at nightfall had proceeded so short a distance that he walked back after dark and spent the night at his own home.

Thank you to Ray Steele, Chris Redmond, Ray Purington, GHC, and others who organized the open forum on early Gill roads at the Town Hall on January 16. We also thank Fred Chase, Ernie

Hastings, Bob Perry, and all the others who shared their knowledge and asked their questions at this pop-up community event. If you could not attend or would like another gathering, please let Ray Steele know.

Battlefield Grant

Watch for an announcement of an open meeting at the end of February to report on the 2019 Battlefield study.

Shake out the cabin fever

The Nolumbekea Project sponsors Native American Social and Stomp Dances at GCC, on Saturday, February 1 from 1-4 PM. Dances will be taught. Come learn and enjoy.

Riverside Book

A few copies of the Riverside book (fifth printing) remain for sale. If

you would like a copy, you may find an order form at the Town Hall or the Town of Gill website (www.gillmass.org/historical.php).

Gill Historical Commission (GHC)

Meetings are on the third Tuesday of each month at 3:00 PM, unless otherwise posted, in the Riverside Municipal Building on Route 2. Charged with preserving Gill's historical sites and records as well as educating residents about town history, the GHC maintains records and artifacts in the Riverside building. If you have questions or information, please contact Kit Carpenter, Bob Perry, Terri Rice, Pam Shoemaker, Lynn Stowe Tomb, or alternates Bev Demars and Lynda Hodsdon Mayo. The GHC welcomes new members and volunteers to help with projects.



*A Happy
Valentine's Day to all
from the
Beaver family in
Gill*

Photo by Amy Gordon.

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