



THE

Gill Newsletter

April 2010 Issue

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Town Hall News

Farewell from Tracy

It is with great regret that I'm writing to tell you all that I have left my position with the Town of Gill. On December 14th I became the Administrative Assistant to the Selectboard in Northfield—my hometown. It was a very difficult decision to leave, one I made only because I feel I have an opportunity to advance along my career path.

I truly enjoyed my time in Gill. The committees and staff were wonderful to work with and I learned so much in such a short time. You have a unique family atmosphere within Town Hall and throughout the Town. Family members may disagree from time to time, but they work it out eventually and move on to tackle the next hurdle.

Having spent some time helping Ray Purington transition into his new role as your Administrative Assistant, I can say with full confidence that the Selectboard made the right choice in hiring him. I wish him well and know that you will show him the same kindness you did me.

Sincerely, Tracy Rogers

Welcome to Ray

At their January 19th meeting, the Selectboard appointed Ray Purington to the permanent position of Administrative Assistant. Ray had been serving in an interim capacity since November 30th, and was the Board's unanimous selection from the 15 applicants for the job.

Ray is a Colrain native who moved to Gill in 1999. He has a degree in Industrial Engineering, and previously worked at Heat-fab in Greenfield and Turners Falls. He is an elected Assessor, and a member

of the Zoning Board of Appeals, and plans to continue to serve on both Boards. Said Ray, "I'm excited by the challenges and opportunities of my new job, and look forward to meeting and working with more of Gill's residents. We have a great town, and I'm glad to be part of it!"

Holiday Caroling

On December 14th Steve Damon and six of his Gill Elementary music students treated Town Hall employees to an instrumental performance of holiday carols. Thank you to Mr. Damon, Fallyn Adams, Chloe Castro-Santos, Simon van Baaren, Maggie Sroka, Nathan Wallenius-Duda, and Owen Ortiz for livening up our afternoon!

A New Coat of Paint

Residents who voted in the January 19th Special State Election might have noticed the fresh coat of paint that has been applied to the inside of the Public Safety Complex. What a difference!

In early January inmates from the Franklin County House of Correction painted several rooms in the Police Department, the entire Highway Department, most of the Fire Department, and even the voting booths. While the Town had to buy



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announcements and
contact information!



the paint, there was no charge for the labor, which was a huge savings. The inmates will be returning to paint the outside of the building when the weather is warmer and dryer.

Tax Rate

On January 20th, the Department of Revenue approved Gill's tax rate for Fiscal Year 2010. The new rate is \$13.71/thousand, an increase of \$0.69/thousand from last year. The Tax Collector expects to mail the real estate and personal property tax bills by the end of January. If you have not received your tax bill, please call Ronnie LaChance at 863-2105.

The increase in the rate was caused by three main factors. First, FY2010 is the year we begin paying for the new highway truck that was bought in 2008. The truck payment accounts for roughly 22 cents of the increase. Second, the allowed 2.5% increase to the levy limit accounts for another 32 cents. The rest of the increase is primarily caused by steady or declining property values. When the total value of all properties in Gill decreases or fails to increase by 2.5%, as it did this year, it has the effect of raising the tax rate.

School Budget Assessment

On December 1st, the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) imposed a Fiscal Year 2010 "Commissioner's Budget" on the Gill-Montague Regional School District. This came about after the School Committee's proposed budget was twice rejected by Town Meeting votes in Gill and Montague, and after a district-wide meeting in September failed to produce agreement on a budget.

Gill's assessment for the imposed

budget is \$1,371,561 of operating costs, which is \$18,840 less than Gill voters had approved at Town Meeting. At a future Town Meeting, voters will be asked to amend their previous votes and approve the reduction. (Gill's \$25,872 share of capital costs was unchanged by the imposed budget.)

Seeking Finance Committee Member

The Finance Committee is currently seeking one additional member. For more information, please contact Ray Steele, Town Moderator, at 413-863-2443 or redsteele@hotmail.com.

Recycling Bins

Blue recycling bins are still available free of charge at the Town Hall. There is a limit of one per household, and the bins may be picked up during regular hours of operation, Monday 9AM-6:30PM and Tuesday thru Thursday 9AM-4:30PM.

*Ray Purington,
Administrator Assistant*

Notes from the Town Clerk

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.

This mailing also includes an opportunity to license your dog. Please return this with the requested information and proper payment.

The Town Clerk has received notification from the Attorney General's office of the approval of Article 8 of the Special Town Meeting held September 14th at the Gill Town Hall. The residents of Gill voted to establish a bylaw creating an Energy Resources

Commission, consisting of five members appointed by the Selectboard for staggered 3-year terms, under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40 Section 81. This notice published pursuant to G.L. c.40, S.32.

If you have any questions, please contact the Town Clerk at 863-8103.

Energy Commission

Western Mass Saves

Want a few simple inexpensive ways to save energy and money? Western Mass Electric in partnership with Smart Power are starting a pilot program for energy savings in Western Mass. Through the Western Mass Saves website, www.westernmasssaves.com, you can become smarter about how you use energy and where you can save money at home, work and play.

As a member of the Gill Energy Commission, Joey LaFleur previewed the site to determine its usefulness for residents. He likes how much information the program makes easily available, and anticipates returning to the site again and again. Each time, learning more how to save energy in new and innovative ways. But that's not all, once you make these energy adjustments, the site tells you how much electricity, CO₂, water and money you have saved.

We encourage all town residents young and old to test drive this new interactive website, www.westernmasssaves.com, and see for yourself where you can cut energy use, save money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, we expect to be co-hosting workshops to help people get started with the website and saving money.



In last month's Newsletter we reported on the Siemens' proposal for saving energy costs in Town buildings and on a grant application seeking funds for a new boiler in the Gill Elementary School. We are expecting a response to the grant application in the coming week (January 19-22) and to receive Siemens' detailed proposal for energy saving devices, upgrades, and refurbishments in the Town buildings (an investment Grade Audit) by the end of the month. Once all this information is available, we will need to determine how much of the Siemens program is practical in terms of financing and anticipated returns, what financing is available, and whether we can negotiate an agreement with Siemens that is acceptable to both the Town and Siemens.

by Tupper Brown.

Gill Fire Department

2009 Alarm Summary

The Gill Fire Department responded to 159 alarms in 2009. 61 alarms (38%) were medical emergencies and 33 were fire alarm activations (21%).

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Assist Public Agency | 2 |
| Brush Fire/Outside Fire | 2 |
| Building Fire | 5 |
| Carbon Monoxide Alarm | 4 |
| Fire Alarm Activation | 33 |
| Fuel Spill/Gas Leak | 4 |
| Medical Emergency | 61 |
| Motor Vehicle Crash | 5 |
| Mutual Aid | 15 |
| Public Assistance | 11 |
| River Rescue | 8 |
| Storm/Wires Down | 9 |

Online Application for Open Burn Permits

Gill has joined most Franklin County towns in offering online permits for

burning brush between January 15 and May 1, depending on weather conditions. The permits are free of charge, but availability depends on weather conditions. You may apply for an online burning permit at www.fcburnpermits.com. Follow the link: "Click here to apply for a burn permit." You must print a copy of the permit and have it in your possession. Burn permits may also be granted through Shelburne Control, the regional emergency dispatch center, by calling 413-625-8200.

Open Burn Regulations

You may only burn BRUSH! All other materials are illegal. No leaves, grass, hay, stumps, building debris, or any other materials are allowed to be burned. All open burning must be a minimum of 75 feet from buildings or structures. Burning will be allowed to start at 10 AM and must be extinguished no later than 4 PM.

- Any open fire must be attended at all times by the permit holder.
- No person shall set, maintain or increase a fire in open air at any time except by permission.
- You must be 18 years or older to apply for permit and/or set, maintain or increase fire once permission has been granted by the Fire Department.
- You must have an appropriate means to extinguish an open air fire completely at the end of the day or if requested by the Fire Department.
- The local Fire Department can refuse or cancel a permit at any time. (Example: violation of permit regulations or change in weather conditions.)

Open burning season is Jan 15–May 1. Call GFD at 413-863-8955 for more information.

Ice And Cold Water Safety

Each winter, many residents are injured from exposure to cold water accidents. Skaters and ice fishermen fall through ice; boaters and canoeists overturn their crafts. Ice on moving water in rivers, streams, and brooks is never safe. The thickness of ice on ponds and lakes depends upon water currents or springs, depth and natural objects such as tree stumps or rocks. Daily changes in temperature cause the ice to expand and contract, which affects its strength. Because of these factors, no one should consider ice to be absolutely "safe."

If someone falls through natural ice, act quickly and call 911 for help. Make sure properly trained and equipped rescue personnel are alerted to respond. Follow the same advice given during swimming emergencies: Reach, Throw, or Row. Do not go out onto the ice. Many times would-be rescuers become victims themselves. Extend a branch, pole, or ladder to the victim, if possible. Throw them a buoyant object, such as a life ring or float tied to a rope. If a boat is nearby, row out to the victim or push it toward them.

Safety experts estimate that half of all drowning victims die from the fatal effects of cold water, hypothermia, and not water-filled lungs. Hypothermia is the excessive lowering of body temperature, which can cause shivering, confusion, loss of muscle strength, unconsciousness, and death. If you should find yourself in a cold water emergency where you are unable to remove yourself from the water, place yourself in a position to preserve your body heat. Bring your knees to your chest, hold your arms to your sides and clasp your hands.



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Cover your head if possible to protect your body from heat loss- as much as 50% of heat loss occurs through your head. Do not try to swim unless a boat, floating object, or the shore is nearby. Swimming causes warm blood to circulate to your arms and legs, where it cools off quickly and reduces survival time by as much as 35-50%.

Visible House Numbers Reduce Emergency Response Time

The Fire Department urges residents to make sure their house numbers are visible from the street. House numbers that are missing or difficult to read can increase response time in an emergency.

Fire Hydrants In Winter

Residents with hydrants adjacent to their property are responsible for removing snow and ice from around them after a storm. Inaccessible hydrants can cause delays in getting water to a fire.

Gill Recreation Committee

The Recreation committee would like to thank the residents of Gill who voted at the last town meeting to support our efforts to continue to bring recreational programs to the town. We look forward to continuing the past programs and developing new programs for all residents. We would also like to thank those residents who made donations to the committee while the budget was being set and awaiting approval by the Selectmen. Those donations helped to keep our programs on track. Special thanks to David Manning of Applied Dynamics for his generous donation to sponsor our basketball teams.

Soccer season began with 26 children in the PreK-2nd grade program, 10 children on 2 teams at the 3rd & 4th grade level and 11 children on the 5-6th grade team. The committee would like to thank Charlie & Kim Malcolm, Steve Striebel, the students at NMH, Mark Almeida, Ben Storrow, Jim Poulsen and Andy Cole who coached and helped to coordinate another successful season. The season ended with all teams participating in the Soccer Jamboree on a beautiful fall day on November 7th in Bernardston at Pratt Field and an End of Season gathering at NMH on November 15th.

Basketball season is underway and we currently have 2 teams for 2-4th graders and 1 5th-6th grade team. The team sizes for the 2-4th grade level are very small so children who are still interested in playing should contact Cathy Demars at 863-2303 or demarscat@hotmail.com to signup. Practices are at NMH on Thursdays at 6:45 and games are on Saturday mornings. Coaches are Pat Garland, Nate Duda and Jim Poulsen.



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The Wacky Sledding Party is scheduled for February 28th, 1-3PM at Oak Ridge Golf Course. Hot chocolate will be provided and we ask participants to bring a dessert to share. This year a trophy will be awarded for the Wackiest Sled and will be kept by the winner until next year's party. So bundle up and join us for a fun day with friends enjoying the crisp winter air.

Looking ahead to summer...we are still awaiting word from Fenway for a possible Red Sox bus trip. Stay tuned as we hope to offer this fun trip again this year.

Lastly, the Recreation Committee includes Nathan Duda, Cathy Demars, Rose Levasseur and Deb Loomer and meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 5:30PM at the Town Hall. There is one position open on the committee and we encourage anyone who may be interested to contact the town administrator at 863-9347 or administrator@gillmass.org.

Respectfully submitted,
Nathan Duda, Cathy Demars, Rose Levasseur, & Deb Loomer

Slate Library News

Slate Library is a warm and cozy spot in the center of Gill. We invite you to come in and pull up a chair and find a good book. We have lots of new titles in both fiction and non-fiction. Some recent additions to the collection are: "The Lost Art of Gratitude" by Alexander McCall Smith, "The Gate at the Stairs" by Lorrie Moore, "About Face" by Donna Leon as well as the latest from John Irving, Greg Mortenson, Robert Parker, and Sue Grafton. Other new titles include, "Lords of Finance: the Bankers Who broke the World" by Liaquat Ahamed, "Eating Animals" by Jonathan Safran Foer, and "Horse Soldiers" by Doug Stanton. The perfect way to while away the dark hours is to pick out a good book for winter reading. We also have wireless service at the library, and a high speed internet connection, so please visit!

Story hour continues throughout the winter months, every Friday morning at 10AM. We offer good company, stories, and a healthy snack. Join us for stories about bears, music, snow, owls, and valentines over the next few weeks. We have picture books, chapter books and audiotapes for kids as well as some new DVD titles. Slate Library is open Monday 2-6PM, Thursday 2-8 PM, and Saturday 10-2PM.

Gill Elementary School

There was a two-week vacation over the holidays this year and this time away from school helped us all return with restored health and new energy. The children are thankful that there is some snow on the ground so that they can spend their recess

FRIENDS OF GILL

The Friends of Gill will be holding a
"PASTA COOK-OFF"

Friday, February 28, 2010
5 PM to 7 PM

at the Gill Congregational Church,
downstairs in the function room.

We invite contestants to participate by bringing their favorite pasta dish. All are welcome to sample and judge the pasta dishes. Suggested donation is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children ages 10 and under.

A prize will awarded for the winner
of the pasta cook-off.

For further information please contact:

Bill Burnham at 863-2970 or
Ronnie LaChance at 863-2105 / 863-9240



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sledding. It is a delightful sight to see the line of red sleds, like a line of red ants, bobbing over the snow. I am glad to see that our students can have fun in the old-fashioned way.

We are also busy with our Valentine Day card-making project. This year and last the students made cards that we then sold to raise money for charities or families in need. Please drop by the school and see what we have to offer. The sale usually starts in the middle of January and goes till mid-February.

As I mentioned in a previous newsletter, we are developing the school-wide theme of Stories from Around the World. We are highlighting that stories are a way to bridge our differences and there can be many types of stories-ones in books, others told orally and still others that are danced or sung. We have several presenters coming in February to develop this theme. On Feb. 9 we host Kim Gregory who impersonates George Washington and recounts the first 22 years of his life. On Feb. 12 we host Jan Atamian, a local author and illustrator, who will share with the children the process of writing and publishing and her story about her Armenian grandmother. As always, the community is invited to attend these events. Check https://www.edline.net/pages/Gill_Elementary to be informed of these and other events in a timely manner.

Sincerely, Rita Detweiler

The Gill Tavern

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Gill Students

Pioneer Valley Regional School

Grade 12

High Honor: Nicholas Duska
Honor: Mary Johnson and Jared Towne

Grade 10

High Honor: Mary Kate Duska and
Jacob Levin

Grade 9

Highest Honor: Jaclyn Lafleur
Honor: Kaylyn Tognarelli and
Jennifer Tufano

Grade 8

Highest Honor: George Atkins
Honor: Whitney Urgiel

Grade 7

Highest Honor: Gabriel Duska
High Honor: Ellen Arena
Honor: James Elliott

Franklin County Technical School

Grade 11

High Honors: Joseph Lafleur
Honors: Corey Therien

Grade 10

Honors: Haley Laramie and
Samantha Shaw

Gill Cultural Council

The Gill Cultural Council has had a busy, productive start to the season. At our fall meetings, we welcomed two new members, Harry van Baaren and Jennifer Simms, brainstormed ways that we could better infuse the community with cultural offerings, and finalized decisions about grant applications from roughly thirty artists, performers, historians, musicians, organizers and presenters of all kinds as well. Thanks to a refashioned Massachusetts Cultural Council online tool kit requiring local councils like ours to take full inventory of their accounts so that all state funds could be distributed during this cycle, we were able to fund twenty of the thirty projects, more than twice the number we are usually able to support.

Our inaugural program, *The Spirits of '76*, was held at the Gill Tavern on January 24th to much success. Through a lively, interactive program, Kim Gregory, in full costume as tavern keeper or “skinker,” brought to life the fascinating, rich history of “Taverns, Tipplers, and Gentlemen Topers,” and regaled the standing-room only crowd of 50+ with humorous tales, bits of Gill’s own tippled past, and samples of delicious syllabub

HONOR ROLL

Grade 9:

High honors: Jeremy Peffer
Honors: Abigail Cichanowicz, Steven
Gaines, Leslie Kozma and Aaron Milewski

Northfield Mount Hermon

Grade 12

High Honors: Bradford Ward
Honors: Kevin Pratt and Faith Weis

Grade 11

High Honors: Nora Hefner
Honors: Frances Hemphill

Grade 10

Honors: Malik Odeh and Margaret
Sturtevant

Grade 9

Honors: Luke Poulsen, Ke Wang and
Raleigh Yates

HIGH SCHOOL ALL-SCHOLASTIC

Matt Garber was selected to the Division III football second team by the Sunday Republican Fall 2009 All-Scholastic teams recognizing “outstanding achievement of athletics in each sport”. Matt is a senior and played for Turners Falls High School.

and cider served up by his wife Carol, the “serving wench.” Thanks to Alden Booth and Laura Carboni for hosting this event at the Tavern, and to all who came out on a slippery late afternoon and made this such a success.

On Tuesday, February 9, 2PM, Gregory will be back at the Gill Elementary School to present *Young George Washington* for all students, their parents, homeschoolers, and interested town residents. Gregory, in Colonial dress, will detail the early years of our first President in this interactive program for children of all ages. Other winter offerings will include a **Historic Map presentation** by Dave Allen, who will prepare and analyze several old maps of Gill, present them to the public, and encourage participants to write narratives based on what’s changed and what’s remained the same. And the Council has given 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, both to be held this winter.

In March, the Country Players will present six performances of *The Miracle Worker* at the Shea Theater for which the Gill Cultural Council has funded a sign language interpreter. In April, the Shea will play host to 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 enables A.C.T. to offer a \$6 ticket price for school children.

We are grateful, as ever, for the support of the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Gill community, and hope you will take full advantage of these excellent programs. We thank outgoing Chair Ronnie La Chance for all her hard work! Feel free to contact Liz Gardner, Chair, at zilrendrag@yahoo.com or 863-8626, with question, and please stay tuned for spring and summer offerings!

Liz Gardner, Chair, Gill Cultural Council
Jocelyn Castro-Santos, Steve Damon, Lynn Nichols, Kathleen Raczynski, Jennifer Simms, Emily Samuels, and Harry van Baaren



Business Advertisements

The Gill Newsletter will include business card size advertisements of local businesses for a year (six bi-monthly issues) for \$50.00. Please send a copy of your business card and a check for \$50.00 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:

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