



THE

Gill Newsletter

December 2008 Issue

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Town Hall News

And the Winner is...

Pat Haigis from Boyle Road won the Name the Truck Contest with her entry "Gillie." The new dump truck with sander and plow is expected to arrive in mid-November, at which point the Highway Department will have the town seal and the truck's new name painted on its side. Pat won a \$50 gift certificate to the Gill Store courtesy of the Friends of Gill and an anonymous donor. Congratulations Pat!

Proposition 2 1/2 Override and Special Town Meeting Scheduled

On November 18 voters in Gill and Montague again held a meeting with the Gill Montague Regional School Committee to try to settle on a budget figure for Fiscal Year 2009. That evening, voters agreed on a budget that reflected a 3% increase over last year's budget. On November 25 the School Committee rejected this budget by a 7-to-1 vote, forcing the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to get involved. On December 1 DESE will set the budget figure for us and both towns and the School Committee must abide by it.

Though we don't know exactly what that figure is as of press time, we know it will be higher than Gill can afford, making it necessary for a Proposition 2 1/2 override or severe cuts in town services. The Selectboard has scheduled a proposition 2 1/2 override vote for Tuesday, January 6, 2009. The override question will be phrased as an inverted pyramid, meaning the question will come in three parts, looking something like this (exact wording and amounts still to be determined as of press time):

1A. Shall the Town of Gill be allowed to assess an additional \$x in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes

of operating the Municipal Government and Public Schools, including three full-time police officers, clerical assistance for certain boards, stipends for certain boards, repairs made to the pump on Fire Engine 1, fire department expenses, the Council on Aging, the Historical Commission, the Memorial Committee, and \$13,631 for the Building Inspector Stabilization Fund, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2008?

Yes ____ No ____

1B. Shall the Town of Gill be allowed to assess an additional \$y in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of operating the Municipal Government and Public Schools, including two full-time police officers, clerical assistance for certain boards, stipends for certain boards, Council on Aging, the Historical Commission, and the Memorial Committee, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2008?

Yes ____ No ____

1C. Shall the Town of Gill be allowed to assess an additional \$z in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of operating the Municipal Government and Public Schools for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2008?

Yes ____ No ____



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



You may vote for or against each question independently. Each question requires a majority of those voting on that question to pass. If more than one question passes, the question with the highest dollar amount will prevail.

Once we know whether voters approve an override, and at what amount, special town meeting on Wednesday, January 7, 2009 will appropriate any funds approved or decide on which services will be cut in order to balance the budget.

Bascom Hollow Bridge Open

The long awaited repairs to the Bascom Hollow Bridge have now been completed thanks to the City of Greenfield. The bridge was opened to traffic in late October.

Volunteers Sought

The Town of Gill has openings on many committees and boards including the Agricultural Commission, Cable Access Committee, Council on Aging, Planning Board, Recreation Committee, and Zoning Board of Appeals. No experience is necessary. Meetings are generally held once a month.

Representatives from various town committees will be on hand during a mini "job fair" on the night of the special town meeting, January 7, at 6:00 PM. in the back of the upstairs room in Town Hall. For more information, contact Tracy at 863-9347 or administrator@gillmass.org.

Solar Powered Light for Flagpole

The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's Renewable Energy Trust awarded the Town of Gill a grant to provide a solar powered light to illuminate the flagpole on the Town Common. Someone brought to the

Selectboard's attention that the flag should be taken down every night if not illuminated. Initial estimates to install a traditional light were prohibitive. On the same day the initial quotes came in, the grant application arrived for a solar powered light—talk about kismet! Representatives from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers installed the light on November 12. All parts and labor were paid for through the grant.

From the Office of the Tax Collector

Preliminary 2009 Real Estate and Personal Property Tax bills were mailed out on July 1, 2008 and were due on October 1, 2008. To date there are several bills that are outstanding, the Town would appreciate prompt payment on these. Interest of 14% on delinquent payments is computed from the due date until payment is made. Any questions on your unpaid tax bills please call Tax Collector, Ronnie LaChance, at 413-863-2105 or e-mail collector-treasurer@gillmass.org

From the Office of the Town Clerk

I want to thank the Election Workers who came out to work at the Presidential Election on November 4, 2008. What a wonderful turn out, as we had 919 of our 1121 voters come to vote. Many thanks also to the Highway Department, Fire Department and Police Department. At this election, as with others in the past there is a wonderful support group so that one person never feels like they are trying to do the job alone. We had two community members step forward to give rides to anyone unable to make it to the polls. Thank you to Rose Levasseur and Mary Whiton.

Many thanks to Carrie Stevens who completed the work on a digital list of all deaths that have occurred in the town of Gill since 1800. This will be a great value to the people who come in to research their ancestry. We can now search on dates or names; this is such an asset to the town.

From the Assessors:

Congratulations to two of our Assessors, Peter Conway and Ray Purington, who successfully completed Assessors Course 101 - Assessment Administration Law, Procedures and Valuation. They attended the week long course at University of MA, Amherst culminating with an online test offered by the MA Department of Revenue. Successful completion of the course is a requirement for Assessors. Good Job!

Tracy Rogers, Administrative Assistant to the Selectboard

Gill Fire Department

Keep Warm, Keep Safe

The temperature continues to drop and the Gill Fire Department joins State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan in urging residents to use caution while heating their homes in a new public education campaign, "Keep Warm, Keep Safe."

These days it is more important than ever to practice safety first when it comes to heating your home. With the cost of heating fuel on the rise, residents may turn to space heaters, pellet stoves, or their fireplace more often. For the most part, these alternative heating devices can be safe. There are, however, simple steps you can take to safeguard you and your family this winter.

Heating is the second leading cause of fires in the home in Massachusetts. One in 10 space heater fires cause a death. Last year, there were 19 fires, three civil-



ian deaths, two civilian injuries and seven fire service injuries attributed to space heater fires statewide.

The *Keep Warm, Keep Safe* campaign will include television, radio, transit and web-based public service announcements, printed materials in several languages, and a grass-roots outreach effort led by local fire departments. Many retailers have pledged to display educational flyers near space heaters, carbon monoxide alarms and pellet stoves. The Department of Fire Services also convened the state's first Winter Heating Fire Safety Task Force that includes utility companies, the Attorney General's office, fire departments, the Department of Public Health, the Massachusetts Oilheat Council, the property insurance industry, Community Action programs, local councils on aging, and retailers.

Space heaters can cause fires if they are placed too close to combustible materials such as drapes, furniture or bedding. Keep anything that can burn three feet away from the space heater and use only heavy-duty extension cords. Install and maintain smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on each floor of your home. Test the alarms once a month and change batteries twice a year. Make sure to check on elderly neighbors regularly in the cold months.

If you heat your home by burning solid fuels (coal, firewood, pellets), be careful before, during and after using these kinds of fuels. Have the chimney annually cleaned by a certified professional. Dispose of the ashes in a metal container, with a lid, away from the house—not in the garage or under the porch.

Natural gas and fuel oil are both safe and efficient. Make sure to have a professional clean and tune-up your furnace and hot water heater every year. Gas leaks can be poisonous so the gas company adds something to make it smell like rotten eggs. If you suspect a leak move outdoors and immediately contact the local fire department.

For more information on winter heating and fire safety, visit www.mass.gov/keepwarm-keepsafe or contact the Gill Fire Department at 413-863-8955.

FRIENDS OF GILL

Over fifty crafters, artists, and demonstrators from Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts came to the 16th Friends of Gill Fall Arts and Crafts Festival. The Festival has grown throughout the years and now involves many members of our community.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions and the support made by the following local businesses and agencies:

A-I Enterprises, A-J Cycle Shop, Cove Farm Creative Marketing, Doug's Auto Body, HVB Imaging, In Stitches, Jan's Package Store, F. M. Kuzmeskus, Inc., Gill Store and Tavern, Geri Johnson and Associates, The Massachusetts Arts Council, Mohawk Real Estate, Skip's Roadside Diner, Town Line Auto, Transcend Carriers, Turners Falls River Culture, Dahna Virgillio Real Estate, and Verona Printers, and Ole Mill Shop.

We are deeply appreciative of the time and labor donated by the following:

Liz Bocon, Karen Cole, Randy Crozier, Nancy Daniel-Green, Lisa Dumas, Lynn Foster, Dick French, Deb Golembeski, the Graveline Family, Ellen Hastings, Renee Jenkins, Colleen Lilly, Deb Loomer, Tim McCabe, NMH, Malik Odeh, Peg Rewa, Tracy Rogers, Elaine Smith, Sarah and Nancy Underwood, Doug Flagg, Walt Congdon, Toni Matthews, Rob Clafin, and Jim McCay.

Special thanks to the Gill Fire Department, the Gill Police Department, the Gill Highway Department, and Peter Turban and Boy Scout Troop 6.

In January we will start making plans for next year's Festival. We would like to include members of the community who have fresh ideas and suggestions. We will meet in the Town Hall on Wednesday, January 14, at 7 PM, and again on Tuesday, January 20, at 7 PM. We welcome your participation.

Please call Barbara Elliott at 863-9708 or Kathleen Raczynski at 863-9288, if you are interested but cannot attend either meeting.



Gill Recreation Committee

Gill Rec. just completed a great soccer season! The autumn weather was nearly perfect with sunny Saturday mornings and games with friends and neighbors. We finished the season with the annual jamboree at the Bernardston fields that was both festive and well organized. Our kids played with exemplary sportsmanship while demonstrating tremendous growth in their skills and tactics. To celebrate the season, we once again had a large turn out for our awards, pot luck, and parents vs. kids play time in the NMH gym.

This season we fielded two 3rd and 4th grade teams and a one fifth and sixth grade team. Everyone played well and the teamwork was impressive thanks to the coaching of Nate Duda and Aaron Milewski for Gill 1 and Pat Garland and Mark Almeida Gill 2 for the third and fourth graders and Elliot Duncan, Brian Bodell and Steve Striebel with the 5th and 6th graders. The Pre-K to 2nd grade had the opportunity to be coached by Charlie Malcolm and the NMH varsity Boys and Girls soccer team. Each Saturday morning the NMH students came down and worked with our youngest soccer players. (Parents of teenagers can appreciate the efforts of the NMH students to get up early in the morning to serve our community.) Being able to watch the NMH varsity teams play, recognize the players as their coaches, and watch their skills and sportsmanship in action is a great way to enhance enthusiasm for the sport of soccer. The kids loved it.

Gill Rec. plans to have a busy winter. Stay tuned for the dates of our annual wacky sledding day. Think well timed snow! We'll be consulting the Farmer's Almanac to plan a date... and alternate dates, too. We will offer Basketball beginning in December, games will start in January. We also expect to continue wrestling this winter thanks to Rob Buyea, the NMH varsity wrestling coach. We are currently looking into the possibility of Sunday skating and swimming. If anyone is or knows a certified life guard who might be interested in helping us out, please notify a Gill Rec. member. We are looking for lifeguards this winter for Sunday afternoons at the NMH pool

Memorial Committee

The Memorial Committee of Gill would like to thank the Friends of Gill for their financial assistance in the cleaning of the Veterans' Monuments located near the Slate Memorial Library. The monuments were sadly falling into disrepair from neglect and the Memorial Committee gladly contacted a monument company willing to undertake the project. It was recommended having the monuments cleaned every five years to avoid the extreme cleaning that was necessary this year.

If you have not had a chance to view the cleaned Veterans' Monuments recently, now would be a great time. If you are visiting the Library, Town Hall, Church or the new restaurant we invite you all to take a moment to observe the wonderful cleaning that was accomplished.



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Slate Library News

Slate Library hosted a successful summer reading program over the last few months. Over 50 Gill children and their families enjoyed a variety of programs relating to the theme “Wild Reads at Your Library”. Events ranged from a Birds of Prey show by Wingmasters of Springfield to a puppet show by Rosalita’s Puppets from Boston. All had lots of fun and all events were very well attended.

Slate Library is now gearing up for its autumn story hour. Story hour is held each Friday morning from 10–11AM. A morning filled with stories, a snack and an art project offers parents and caregivers in Gill a chance to come together and socialize while promoting early literacy skills. Some upcoming story hour themes will be Apples, Acorns and Squirrels, Colorful Leaves and Furry Friends. We hope we see you there!

Gill Elementary School

As the school year has progressed, I have had the chance to get to know more and more members of the Gill community. Nancy Griswold, Ann Banash, Leland Stevens, and Tracy Rogers come to school in early October for a chance to meet the new principal, tour the school and visit with our sixth grade students. These students are studying municipal government and what better way to learn about it than to talk to their own town officials. I invited Paul Seamans, former principal and military veteran, to come to school to receive some old and damaged flags. He explained to the children how to properly dispose of them. We also held our Parent Orientation Night when many families came to meet their children’s teachers and learn about the academic curriculum. It is wonderful to see the large turnout of families who are so invested in their children’s education.

I also want to invite any member of the Gill community to consider joining our School Council. The School Council is composed of the principal, two teachers, two parents of students and one member from the community-at-large. Our two teachers have volunteered, our two parents have been elected, but we still need our community representative. Will you consider joining us? The commitment is for one academic year and we meet about once a month.

The School Council’s role is to assist principals in developing the school improvement plan. This group will establish the programmatic priorities for the year, such as whether or not to make environmental recycling or use of outdoor space or safety issues our main focus. The group does not deal with budgetary issues. Once we develop the improvement plan, we present it to the School Committee for their review and approval. This is an opportunity to get to know some great people and help the children of the Gill Elementary School community. If you are interested in serving, please call me at school at 863-3255. I hope you will join us.

*Rita Detweiler,
Principal at Gill Elementary School*

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Gill Historical Commission

The Gill Historical Commission meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 PM in the Riverside School on Route 2. The Commission maintains the Gill Museum in an effort to preserve the history of Gill; the Museum is open at advertised times as well as by appointment. The Commission continues to appreciate the memorabilia, stories, and photographs that many people share or donate in the interest of documenting and preserving the history of Gill. If you have information or questions about Gill and its history, please contact Kit Carpenter, Bev Demars, Stuart Elliott, Dick French, Bob Perry, Lynda Hodsdon-Mayo, or Pam Shoemaker.



The annual October open house at the Museum during the Gill Craft Fair again drew many visitors. Some people came for the first time, and others returned to see favorites like the school pictures or find house pictures and family history; we were appreciative of the stories people told of Gill in other decades. The new exhibits on the Gill 1888 signature quilt and on Simon Cady Phillips and his related families of the Ballards, Bascoms, and Blakes as well as the cemetery maps were popular. If you missed these exhibits, please plan to visit later this year to see them. In this issue, the GHC is sharing this account of the dedication of the Gill Town Hall:

*Dedication of the Town Hall
February 5th, 1868*

The formal dedication of the new Town Hall took place on the evening of February 5th Wednesday. The hall was crowded to its utmost capacity, by inhabitants of the town and strangers from abroad, and the exercises were opened by prayer from Rev. Edward J. Fieldings, an officiating minister of the Congregational Church, after the performance of "Hail Columbia" by the Gill Brass Band, stationed in the gallery. An address was then delivered by Josiah D. Canning, which will be found recorded in the succeeding pages, agreeable to a vote of the Town Passed at the Annual Meeting March 2nd. At the close of the Address the band played "America"; and Rev. John Moore of Greenfield gave an able essay upon the subject of civil government. The band responded with "Yankee Doodle" S. O. Lamb, Esq. of Greenfield was next called upon, who expressed his great satisfaction with the exercises of the evening and congratulated the people upon their new Town Hall. Mr. Lamb was followed by Leonard Barton who spoke in praise of the Town, its natural advantages, etc. Roswell Field, Esq. succeeded Mr. Barton with remarks concerning the fossil impressions in the rocks at the Falls, alluded to in Mr. Canning's address. A vote of thanks was given by the house to the speakers on the occasion and to the Band for their entertainment; and also to the ladies of the Society for Local Improvement for their assistance in furnishing the lamps for the Hall, the chairman's table, chairs, etc. Rev. Andrew Boyle, of the Methodist Church offered the closing prayer, and to the strains of "Home, Sweet Home" the crowd dispersed, well satisfied and well pleased with the entertainment of the evening.

Nelson Burrows, Esq. was president of the evening; Roswell Purple, Vice president, Simon C Phillips, Secretary. The following persons were Committee of Arrangements for the occasion:- Leonard Barton, Samuel P. Stratton, Ezra O. Purple, Prentice Slate, Oliver B. Green, Dexter A. Clark, and Joseph B. Marble. The contractor for the erection of the Hall was Oliver B. Green, and the master-builder Eli W. Thompson. Total cost of the hall, including land, furniture, etc. according to the report of the Building Committee was \$3780.86.





Gill Students

HONOR ROLL

First Quarter

PIONEER VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL

- Grade 12** Honor: Nils Albert Johnson
- Grade 11** High Honor: Nicholas Duska
- Grade 9** High Honor: Jacob Levin
Honor: Mary Duska
- Grade 8** Highest Honor: Jaclyn Lafleur, Emily Messer,
Kevin Wang, and Raleigh Yates
High Honor: Kaylyn Tognarelli
Honor: John Arena
- Grade 7** Highest Honor: George Atkins
Honor: Whitney Urgiel

TURNERS FALLS HIGH SCHOOL

- Grade 12** First Honors: Eric Dumas, Jodi Hallett, Amber Henry,
Angela Marguet, and Joseph Rinaldi III
Second Honors: Jacob Field
Third Honors: Anthony Denofrio and Thomas Field
- Grade 11** First Honors: Danielle Dolhenty and Mackae Freeland
Second Honors: Matthew Garber, Corey Hescocock,
Kathleen Rinaldi, and Sarah Underwood
- Grade 10** First Honors: Nina Dodge, Makayla Dolhenty,
Brooke Hastings, and Andrew Turban
Second Honors: Krysten Hawkins, Julie Howard-
Thompson, Jack Hubert, and Natasha Vaughn
Third Honors: Rachel Arial and Emily Robertson
- Grade 9** First Honors: Todd Richardson
Second Honors: Christopher Gordon, Colton Hallett,
Seth Lemieux, Katelyn Phillips, Brittany Rawson,
and Samantha Shaw

GREAT FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Grade 8** First Honors: Katelyn Dodge, Shawn Englehardt,
and Timothy Meyer
Second Honors: Brittany York
Third Honors: Ceara Dolhenty, Leslie Kozma,
Bethany Laramie, Jonathan Marguet, and Nala Vaughn
- Grade 7** Second Honors: Tyler Richardson
- Grade 6** First Honors: Spencer Hubert, Stephanie Robertson,
and Nicholas York
Second Honors: Zachary Demars, Jessica Gaines,
and Cole Tognarelli
Third Honors: Tristan Kostanski

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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:

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

January 15th for the February Issue.

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