



THE

Gill Newsletter

December 2007 Issue

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Town Hall News

Estimated Tax Payments

The Tax Collector would like to “Thank” the taxpayers who have pre-paid on their 2008 Real Estate bills.

Due to extenuating circumstances, the 08 tax bills will not be ready to mail soon.

If your payment is received by December 31, 2007, you may claim it on your 2007 Income Tax Return, however, to facilitate the Town’s cash flow, we would appreciate your pre-payment by December 15, 2007.

Free Recycle Bins Available at Town Hall

The town has 50 blue recycle bins now available at Town Hall. Residents may pick them up at town hall Monday—Friday 9:30AM—4:30PM. First come - first serve, limit two per household.

PEG Access

What is PEG Access? You may have noticed over the years that the cable company, Comcast, charges you an “Access Fee... to support the Public, Educational and Governmental [PEG] programming provided in Gill. In the past, this fee was collected by Comcast and paid to Greenfield Community Television (GCTV) to provide local cable programming on channel 15. Now, however, that fee is collected by Comcast and paid to the Town of Gill so that it can provide its own programming.

Starting December 1, Gill will override GCTV’s signal during certain times of the day to bring you informational notices about the goings on in town. Information will include notes about town committee meetings, Recreation Department pro-

grams, and community activities. If you have a note you’d like to get listed, please contact Tracy at town hall at 863-9347 or administrator@gillmass.org and tune in to channel 15 to check us out!

Chapter 43D – Local Expedited Permitting

Last year, the Commonwealth enacted Massachusetts General Law Chapter 43D, also known as the Local Expedited Permitting Program. The goal of the Program is to make the municipal permitting process for targeted economic development projects more predictable, consistent and efficient, without compromising local jurisdiction or encouraging imprudent projects. Towns that choose to enact Local Expedited Permitting will have access to technical assistance to facilitate the implementation of a streamlined permitting process for eligible “Priority Development Sites” (PDS). An eligible PDS site must meet the following criteria:

1. the site has been identified and approved by the town and the property owner(s) have given their permission to designate the site a PDS;



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



2. the site is located in a commercial or industrial zone; and
3. the site can accommodate the development or re-development of a building(s) that is at least 50,000 square feet in size.

In addition, participating towns will have priority consideration for select grant programs for state-approved PDS locations, online state marketing of the PDS, and the ability to collect special fees for PDS permit applications. Thanks to funding from a state-awarded grant, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) is able to help interested towns in identifying possible PDS locations and applying for a Technical Assistance Grant from the state for up to \$100,000.

On September 27, members of many of the town's committees met to hear a presentation on the Program from FRCOG staff. Committee members felt the Program could enable Gill to use the technical assistance funds to conduct a more in-depth archaeological study of the Mariamante parcel. Definitive answers on what lies underneath the soil on that site would make the parcel more appealing to a future developer. Voters will be asked at the next town meeting to adopt Chapter 43D so that the town may proceed with applying for these funds.

For more information, please contact Peggy Sloan, FRCOG Director of Planning & Development at: 413-774-1194 x105.

For additional information about Chapter 43D, go online to: www.mass.gov/mpro.

Tracy Rogers, Administrative Assistant to the Selectboard

From the Office of the Town Clerk

In anticipation of the approaching 2008 Presidential Election Year, I would like to remind everyone to register to vote if they have not already done so. Elections will be held at the Fire Station at 196 Main Road. Anyone unable to attend the election may complete an absentee ballot at the office of the Town Clerk in the Town Hall.

Please call if you have any questions—413-863-8103.

Regarding Gill's Tax Rate

Statement of progress—The final State requested documentation has been sent to Boston the first week of November and this office is hopeful that this completes the process. We have reason to believe that the information we just sent is probably the last of many State requests. Now we wait to have these numbers certified by the State. The office is required not to use or give out any of these figures until they have been certified by the State. It is important for the residents to realize that these decisions are not being made on the town level and the process is not being delayed on the town level. We have done all that has been requested as quickly as possible. We are, however, aware of the frustration being felt by town residents to see these values. We will make every effort to get them to you as soon as the State completes its certification process. At that time a notice will appear inviting you to see these values and we will be able to begin the process of setting our tax rate.

Thank you for your patience and please call the office of the Assessors if

you have any questions. The office is open Monday through Thursday from 9:30AM to 12:30PM at 413-863-0138.

From the Desk of the Town Clerk

On the evening of October 22, 2007, I attended a program at Northfield Mountain where guest speaker Sarah Doyle presented "Dinosaur Trackers of Franklin County".

The evening and the presentation were so exciting and offered an opportunity to see Gill from another perspective.

Since I became Town Clerk in 2003, the history of the area and the people who lived here has become more and more interesting. Every day some new fact or discovery brings someone from the past into the present. It can be from a genealogy inquiry or a death certificate request or an old deed naming a past owner, long forgotten from the community they once called home and perhaps lived in their entire life.

You can't help but think about who these people were and how they lived. Sarah Doyle took us on a journey to a period in Franklin County when Dexter Marsh, Roswell Field and James Deane lived and shared a common fascination with animal tracks they began to find hidden in the Connecticut River Valley rocks during the early 1800's.

She gave us some feeling of knowing these men in the way they researched and shared their interests with others. She described their interactions with each other and how they wanted to be remembered. She examined their successes and what we know today from the work they did so many years ago. It was great. I want to know more and



can't wait to do some research of my own to fill in some of the spaces where I have more questions. It all becomes some sort of big puzzle. I am not sure if it will ever be entirely put together, but it is the game of looking for more information that it seems to be about. Like a treasure hunt.

It was the moment she said some piece of information made "the hair on her neck stand up" that I recognized that as a feeling I was getting from this and other pieces of information that come through my office. I was never a very serious student of history. It took more than 50 years for me to get caught up in this, but I hope now that it is here to stay.

Sarah Doyle attracted a noteworthy audience. Just being present in the company of so many area researchers, geologists and historians was a major moment in itself.

Lately as I drive to work I often imagine the people of the past in front of the homes they once lived in or sometimes I think about how they walked or rode down the same roads I now travel. As I returned home after the presentation with the wind and rain and leaves blowing all around, I could not help but imagine the dinosaurs that had become the work and study of these men from our area. To think that the Pioneer Valley could be the site of the first tracks known to science to be recorded in the western world. Sarah Doyle's presentation is a reminder of the great resource of Natural History available here.

Lynda Hodsdon Mayo
Town Clerk-Gill

FRIENDS OF GILL

GILL ARTS AND CRAFTS FESTIVAL

This year's Gill Arts and Crafts Festival was bigger and more popular than ever. The weather was beautiful fall New England, cool with a light breeze and plenty of sunshine. In addition to fine crafts, great food, and children's activities, the Friends of Gill were able to add new features like live music, craft demonstrations, and antiques appraisals with the help of local businesses and the community at large.

The Friends of Gill gratefully acknowledge the contributions made by A-I Enterprises, A-J Cycle Shop, Country Oil, FirstLight Power and the Northfield Mountain Recreation Center, Foster's Supermarket, F. M. Kuzmeskus, Inc., Greenfield Savings Bank, In Stitches, Jan's Package Store, Northern Woolies, Northfield Mount Hermon School, Oak Ridge Golf Course, Renaissance Builders, Uppingil Farm, Verona Press, and the Wagon Wheel Restaurant.

Special thanks to the Gill Firemen's Association for their great food and ever-ready help before and during the fair, the Gill Police Department for traffic control, the Gill Highway Department for grounds maintenance and moving much needed equipment, the Gill Historic Commission, Ann Banash for her wisdom and support, Peter Turban and Boy Scout Troop 6 for their invaluable help in making the fair work, Malik Odeh for his excellent juggling, Bob Perry for his talks on logging on the Connecticut, and the many community volunteers who donated their time to support the Fair.

Proceeds from the Gill Arts and Crafts Fair support community activities and services throughout the year.



Gill Fire Department

Fire Prevention Activities

The Gill Firemen's Association held its annual Halloween Party on Sunday, October 28, at the Gill Fire Station. Sixty-eight school-age children showed off their costumes and participated in games and fun activities hosted by firefighters.

The annual party serves as a follow-up activity to Fire Prevention Week when Gill's firefighters present Student Awareness of Fire Education programs to area school children. The S.A.F.E. program, which is funded through grants from the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services, provides fire safety training and information for children of all ages to learn and bring home to their families.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless poisonous gas that results from the incomplete combustion of fuels such as natural gas, propane, oil, wood, and gasoline. Each year, many Massachusetts residents die from accidental CO poisoning and thousands more are injured. Any residential property in Massachusetts, regardless of size, that contains fossil fuel burning equipment (like oil, gas, wood, coal, etc.) or contains enclosed parking (like an attached or enclosed garage) is required to have carbon monoxide alarms.

Carbon monoxide alarms must be installed on every level of the home, except for basements and attics that do not have inhabitable living spaces. On levels with sleeping areas, the alarms must be placed within ten feet of bedroom doors. Anyone who sells their residential property is required to have an inspection by the fire department prior to the sale or transfer of the property.

Call the Gill Fire Department at 863-8955 if you need further information about carbon monoxide alarms.

Holiday Safety Tips


Winter holidays bring families together for cheer and celebration. Make sure your holidays are memorable for the right reasons. Chose a fresh Christmas tree that is not dry or shedding its needles and keep it in a sturdy stand away from exits, stoves, fireplaces, and other heat sources. Water the tree daily. Use decorative lights that are certified by an independent testing lab. Discard lights with cracked or frayed cords, or loose



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or damaged sockets. Be sure extension cords are not pinched behind or beneath furniture and unplug all decorative lighting before leaving home or going to bed.

Use flame-retardant and non-combustible decorations. Place candles in non-tip holders and keep them away from trees, decorations, curtains, and other combustible materials. Never burn candles in windows or near exits. Do not leave candles burning unattended or within the reach of small children. Extinguish all open flames before you leave the room or go to bed.

Solid-Fueled Heating Appliances

According to the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services, in 2006, there were 783 fire incidents involving solid-fueled appliances, fireplaces, and chimneys in Massachusetts. These incidents make up 29% of all heating-related fires and resulted in \$1.3 million in property losses.

A building permit must be obtained prior to the installation of fireplaces, wood, or coal-burning stoves. These units must be inspected by the local building inspector prior to their initial use as required by the Massachusetts State Building Code.

Solid-fueled heating appliances cannot share a common flue with chimney flues utilized by other solid fuel, fossil fuel, or gas fired appliances. Have the chimney inspected annually by a qualified mason. Cracks in the flue or mortar joints can allow flames and heated gases to extend into the structure.

Most chimney fires occur due to the buildup of creosote, a tarry by-product of burning wood. Have your

chimney cleaned before each heating season. Burn only dry, well-seasoned hardwood to reduce creosote accumulation in the chimney.

Trash and Recycling

Proper Disposal of Wall-Mounted Mercury Thermostats

The Franklin County Solid Waste Management District has expanded its free thermostat collection program. The program accepts wall-mounted mercury thermostats: these are the older, non-digital types that are round or rectangular in shape. If a contractor or homeowner removes an old thermostat, it should not be thrown in the trash. These thermostats contain mercury, which can be hazardous to our environment and human health if not properly disposed of.

Mercury is toxic and found in many common household items such as button batteries, rechargeable batteries, mercury thermometers and fluorescent light bulbs, including the new energy saving compact fluorescent bulbs. Mercury thermostats contain 3000 times the amount of mercury as compact fluorescent bulbs. None of these mercury-containing items should be thrown out in the trash; they can all be safely disposed of at the sites listed below.

It is important to return the entire thermostat, and not just the mercury-containing ampoule, since the casing provides protection for the mercury during shipment. Handle carefully. If a mercury ampoule breaks, ventilate and vacate the area for 15 minutes.

Do not use a vacuum cleaner to clean up. Droplets of mercury can be pushed together using a piece of paper and then collected using one or more pieces of paper. Small drops can be picked up on tape. Place these items and the thermostat in a doubled plastic bag and seal tightly. Wash hands, remove any contaminated clothing and wash it before reuse.

Thermostats can be brought to the District office at 50 Miles St. in Greenfield. Hours vary; please call 413-772-2438. District residents can also bring them to one of the regional hazardous waste collection sites at the transfer stations in Bernardston (first Saturday of each month; 8AM—noon from May-Nov and 9AM—11AM from Dec-April), Colrain (every Saturday, 8AM—4PM), or Conway (first Saturday of each month, 11AM-2PM). These sites are open to residents of the towns within the Franklin County Solid Waste District: Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Erving, Gill, Hawley, Heath, Leyden, Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Rowe, Shelburne, Sunderland, Warwick, Wendell and Whately. There is no charge for recycling mercury thermostats.

For more information, please visit: www.franklincountywastedistrict.org and click on “Mercury,” or call 413-772-2438.

MA Relay for the hearing impaired: 711 or 1-800-439-2370 (TTY/TDD).

The District is an equal opportunity provider.



Gill Montague Education Fund

TURNERS FALLS—The Gill-Montague Education Fund Board of Directors met Oct. 11 and awarded nine grants totaling more than \$4,700. This was the first of two funding cycles for the 2007-08 school year.

The Gill-Montague Education Fund is a non-profit organization established in 1996 by the parents and citizens of the towns of Gill and Montague to support district schools. Its goals are to provide programs and resources for the schools that would enrich the educational opportunities available to students and to encourage advocacy for public education within the community. Grants were awarded for:

- A field trip for first graders at Hillcrest Elementary School to the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art as a culminating activity for their author study of Eric Carle;
- A field trip for world language students at Turners Falls High School to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston to learn about art;
- Girls' varsity soccer uniforms for students at Turners Falls High School;
- A scanner/color printer/color copier for the Social Studies Department at Turners Falls High School;
- New library books for the library at Great Falls Middle School/Turners Falls High School;
- Musical instruments for students in the Alternative Learning Program at Hillcrest Elementary School;
- A water plant and animal study for students at Montague Center School;
- World languages peace panels at Sheffield School; and
- A luau integrating history and culture for Turners Falls High School students during a science/business study trip to Hawaii.

The GMEF has awarded more than \$37,000 in grants during the last three and a half years to enhance learning in various fields including science, music, art, athletics, language and reading.

To learn more about the Gill-Montague Education Fund and how to get involved, go to the GMEF website at www.thegmef.org. For more information, contact Joyce Phillips at jp44@comcast.net



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. 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 Commission is pleased with the large attendance at the Gill Museum on the Saturday and Sunday of the Gill Craft Fair. The Museum offers a variety of exhibits including dinosaur foot prints, family history folders, school pictures, vintage clothing, farm tools, and household items. This year's exhibit honors volunteers in the town and features Gill firefighters; this photographic display was seen for the first time at the open house and will be viewable throughout the winter and spring. Many thanks to all involved in making this exhibit work well.

Last spring Bob Perry presented his one-man show on river logging to the elementary children in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2. At the craft fair in October, Bob repeated his informative show about an important piece of Gill history. Although the attendance was low, those who came enjoyed learning more about logging on the Connecticut River.

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.

Slate Library News

Lots of fun events have happened at Slate library during the past month. In October Slate library hosted Caravan Puppets of Amherst and had a full house for "Tales of Mystery" a puppet performance of multicultural folktales. As part of the Halloween festivities children created spooky dioramas and Halloween houses which were displayed throughout the library. It was a wonderful event, enjoyed by many families and the turn out was fantastic!

Story hour continues to be a popular event for young families in Gill. It is held every Tuesday morning at 10 AM at the library and features stories, art projects and a healthy snack. It is a wonderful opportunity for caregivers and their little ones to meet other children in Gill. Upcoming themes for story hour will explore winter, snow and hibernation. We have new titles such as "Snow Bears" by Jan Brett, "The Busy Little Squirrel" by Nancy Tafuri and "The Boy Who Painted Dragons" by Demi. Come get cozy on the big blue alphabet rug!

There are many new young adult titles as well. Check out "The Mysterious Edge of the Heroic World" by E.L. Konigsburg, "The New Policeman" by Kate Thompson and "The Mysterious Benedict Society" by Trenton Lee Stewart. We also have many new biographies aimed at young adults; some titles from the Up Close series include Johnny Cash and Rachel Carson. Stop by the library for materials for school reports and projects. We are always happy to be of service!

New books are arriving for adults as well and knitting night on the third Thursday of every month continues to

be a popular social event. Stop by and browse our new additions to the collection and give us your suggestions for new titles.

Slate library is open
Monday from 2 PM—6 PM,
Thursday 2 PM—8 PM and
Saturday from 10 AM—2 PM.

Elisabeth von Trapp in Concert

The Gill-Montague Education Fund & Radio Station WIZZ – AM 1520 {celebrating its 5th anniversary} present A Von Trapp Christmas with Elisabeth von Trapp.

The concert will be held Sunday, December 9, 2007 at 2 PM in the Turners Falls High School Theater, 222 Turnpike Road, Turners Falls. Elisabeth will perform festive music from around the world with timeless ballads, Austrian, English and French carols along with traditional holiday music. Also performing will be cellist, Erich Kory. Ticket - \$20

Ticket locations:
Scotty's Convenience Store,
World Eye Bookshop,
by calling Sandy-TFHS 863-7218 or
at the Gill-Montague Education Fund
website: www.thegmef.org

GILL HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The Gill Historical Museum
in the Riverside Municipal
Building on Route 2 will be open
Thursdays from 4 PM to 7 PM
starting December 6th, 2007.





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

Gill Fire Dept.
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