



THE

# Gill Newsletter

Summer 2019 Issue

## 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.

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## Town Hall

### Special Town Meeting

There will be a Special Town Meeting on Tuesday, August 6th at 6:00 PM at the Town Hall. There is only one article, so it likely will be a brief meeting. Please try to arrive on time. The warrant for the meeting is available on the Town's website.

The article asks voters to authorize the Selectboard to seek special legislation which will allow our current Fire Chief, Gene Beaubien, to remain on the Fire Department (as Chief and/or as a Firefighter) for five more years after he turns 65 in January. Massachusetts pension laws require firefighters and police officers to retire at age 65 unless special legislation is enacted for the individual. Chief Beaubien has expressed the desire to continue with our Fire Department, and the Fire Department's Board of Engineers and the Selectboard support this course of action.

### Retirement, part one

Lynda Hodsdon Mayo, our Town Clerk since 2003, retired on June 30th. We thank Lynda for many years of dedicated service to the Town. Her love of her town and its residents shone through with every person she assisted. Lynda's friendly presence is not gone from Town Hall, though. She has remained on as the Assessors' Clerk and you can still find her in the Assessors' Office from 9 AM – 12:30 PM Monday through Thursday. The Selectboard appointed Doreen Stevens to be the Town Clerk until May 2021. Welcome, Doreen!

### Retirement, part two

Mitchell LaClaire Sr., our Highway Superintendent since 2004, has announced his retirement effective August 14th. With his grinning smile and friendly wave Mickey could brighten even the grayest wintry day. Thank you for all you've done for Gill, Mick. We're going to miss you!

The Highway Superintendent position has been advertised. The job description and application requirements can be found on the Town's website: [www.gillmass.org/highway](http://www.gillmass.org/highway). Applications are due by August 16th.

### Updates to Gill's Open Space & Recreation Plan

With technical assistance from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, work will resume later this summer on updating the Town's 2011 Open Space & Recreation Plan. The Plan aids the Town as it continues to plan for future growth and protection of our natural, scenic, cultural and historic resources - all the things that make Gill a special place to live. Having an approved plan also makes the Town eligible for various state grants. Trail work and other improvements at the



Check in with the Gill Website

[www.gillmass.org](http://www.gillmass.org)

for up to date news,  
announcements and  
contact information!





Town Forest were funded by one such grant.

Be on the lookout this fall for a community survey where you can weigh in with your ideas about priorities for open space resources and recreational activities and opportunities. And if you are interested in being part of the group working on the update, please contact Ray Purington at 863-9347.

### **Trash & Recycling Reminders**

USA Waste & Recycling, the company that does the curbside collection of our trash and recyclables, reminds everyone to please have your items to the curb by 7:00 AM. Items that are not put out in time may not be collected until the following week. If there is a problem with your rubbish or recycling pickup, please call USA Waste & Recycling directly at (413) 349-3801 as soon as possible.

It's important to remember not everything can be recycled, even if you think it should. Do not put these items in your recycling bins: plastic bags and wrap, Styrofoam, ceramics, paint cans or spray paint cans, auto glass, light bulbs, motor oil jugs, containers larger than 2 gallons, plastic or ceramic dishes, vases, gardening pots, or syringes/sharps. Repeat offenders will receive a letter from the Town, and could even have collection services suspended.

### **Recycling Bins & Compost Pails**

Recycling bins and kitchen compost pails are again available free of charge at the Town Hall. There is a limit of one bin and one pail per

household. Items may be picked up during regular hours of operation, Monday 9-6:30 and Tuesday thru Thursday 9-4:30.

### **Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day & Clean Sweep Bulky Waste Collection Day**

This year's annual Franklin County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day is on Saturday, September 21st. The next "Clean Sweep" bulky waste collection is on Saturday, October 19th. Be sure to mark both dates on your calendar. More information about both events will be on the Town's website and in local newspapers.

### **Town Clerk**

The Selectboard appointed Doreen Stevens as Town clerk for the remainder of Lynda Hodsdon Mayo's term, through May 18, 2021. Please stop by and introduce yourself. Lynda has left very large shoes to fill, and the town has been most fortunate to have her serve as Town Clerk these last 16 years. Fortunately Lynda will continue to serve as the Assessors Clerk until further notice.

There will be a special Town Meeting on August 6, 2019 in regards to keeping Gene Beaubien on as our Fire Chief past retirement. A quick reminder that you must be registered to vote in order to vote at Town Meeting.

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).

*Doreen Stevens  
Town Clerk*

### **Gill Harvest Festival**

Join Your Neighbors at the 1st Annual Gill Harvest Festival

- The Fire Department will provide food and drink
- Friends of Gill will provide apple pies
- There will be farm activities for all ages
- Gill farms and farmers will display the fruit of their labors
- There will be tractors to climb and hay wagons to ride.
- Search for coins in the sawdust
- More, much more

**Sunday September 22, 2019**

**12 – 3 p.m. on The Common,  
Town Center, Gill**

All those interested in displaying farm or farm related products please call an Ag Commission member or go to the town website.

Commission Members:

Ray Steele (Chair),  
Roger Augustine, Tom Chalmers,  
Dick French, Ed Golembeski,  
and Gary Stevens.

### **5th Annual Senior Health and Safety Expo**

On Tuesday, September 10th, Franklin County Sheriff's Office TRIAD Unit and Charlene Manor will sponsor the 5th Annual Senior Health and Safety Expo at



Schuetzen Verein on Barton Cove from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. A luncheon will be provided, free of charge, to all who attend. Lunch will be served by the Franklin Tech Culinary Arts Program and the Sheriff's Office Food Service.

Please consider coming to the Expo to learn about senior services. In the past there have been fifty vendors in attendance providing information and resources designed to assist seniors live at home as independently as possible.

The Gill Neighbors Group will be represented. You will have a chance to ask questions and meet some of the Neighbor Volunteers who are ready to assist senior Gill residents maintain independence in their own homes.

## "Second Friday" Wellness Clinic

A monthly Walk-in Wellness Clinic is held each Second Friday at Stoughton Place from 9:00 -11:00 a.m. with Lisa White, RN, regional public health nurse. This service is provided free to residents through the Town's membership in Franklin Regional Council of Governments Cooperative Public Health Service (CPHS).

- Blood pressure screening
- Help with connecting to needed services
- Sharps collection/box exchange
- Tick testing info
- Flu vaccine (available in late September - check FRCOG website or call for dates)

For more information, call Lisa at (413) 665-1400 x 114.

## GMEF Thank you

The Gill Montague Education Fund would like thank the collaborative efforts of so many who help make our Annual Gala possible. We are TRULY HUMBLED BY THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT WE RECEIVE FROM.....

Our Underwriters, Corporate Sponsors; Major Advertisers; the many general advertisers within our communities; Tier-givers, In-Kind Contributors; our partnerships with Local Bakeries for the delicious treats enjoyed at intermission, Hillside Pizza for providing supper, the generosity of our performers AND our audience.

Each year when our report is filed with the AG Office we are proud and excited to learn that more than 99% of the revenue earned is returned to our students.

Public Education faces many challenges – many of the enrichment opportunities we support were once part of the school budgets. But no more – Enrichment for academics, athletics and the arts is extremely limited. Without your continued support, it would be difficult or impossible for the GMEF to provide these opportunities.

See you April 25, 2020 at our Annual Gala – "The Legend of Johnny Cash," with tribute artist Philip Bauer from Branson, MO.

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## Progress toward a Green Burial Option at Riverside Woods

The Gill Cemetery Commission is well on its way to combining three goals into one at Riverside Woods at the corner of Main and Mountain Roads: beautiful woodlands for hiking and picnicking; land preservation and restoration; and the option of a tranquil green-burial final resting place for loved ones.

After the Environmental Protection Agency granted permission for a green-burial cemetery in June 2018, the Commission notified abutting neighbors, established that the area is more than 100 feet from any water source, confirmed that Snow and Sons Landscaping can dig graves among the trees, and determined that the earth is sandy, which is perfect for green burial.

This spring the Gill Highway Department Crew, together with the Franklin County House of Correction Community Work Crew and a volunteer from Greenfield, did a major clean-up of the wooded area and created an internal path - a big thank you to all of them.

The Commission is already working on the next steps: drafting rules and regulations, deciding on signage, establishing a plot-marking system, and finding a bier (a stand or cart for transporting a coffin) that will be stored in the crypt at the Riverside Cemetery.

**Wanted – Gill Cemetery**  
Commission is looking for an estimate for a 2-wheeled coffin bier, 36" high x 33" wide x 90" long.

Mail estimate to Gill Cemetery Commission, 325 Main Rd, Gill MA 01354 or contact Joan Pillsbury, 413-863-4634 or jpillsbury@gillmass.org.

**Wanted – Gill Cemetery**  
Commission wants a platform built to hold a cart that is 36" high x 33" wide x 90" long. Also help empty the crypt of fencing and old granite stones at Riverside Cemetery. Joan Pillsbury: 413-863-4634, jpillsbury@gillmass.org, or Gill Cemetery Commission, 325 Main Rd, Gill MA 01354.

## Antenna Cloud Farm

Gill's own music festival, Antenna Cloud Farm, is underway! Join us for the second concert of the season on August 10 at 6 p.m., performed by MIRAH, an extremely talented singer-songwriter. All of our concerts are followed by a community reception with tasty offerings donated by our favorite local foodies: Jen's Bread at Everyday Farm, Upinngil cheese, Real Pickles, and People's Pint. ACF will open at 4 p.m. for folks who want to bring a picnic and stroll around the hill before the show. House doors will open at 5:30 p.m. for seating. Come join the fun, and take in the sunset from the top of Green Hill Road. We offer Adult, Junior, and Reduced-Price tickets, and we are ADA-accessible (please let us know in advance if you would like to utilize our wheelchair ramps). Visit our website for information: [www.antennacloudfarm.com](http://www.antennacloudfarm.com). Hope to see you up on the hill for some great music!

## Honor Roll

### 4th Quarter

#### Pioneer Valley Regional School

##### Grade 12

High Honor: Jake Wallace

##### Grade 9

Highest Honor: Meena Relyea-Strawn

High Honor: Issac Damen  
Honor: Robert Kenyon

##### Grade 8

Highest Honor: Anna Baskowski  
Honor: James Staelens

#### Turners Falls High School

##### Grade 12

Second Honors: Reilan Castine

##### Grade 11

Third Honors: Mason Kucenski

##### Grade 10

First Honors: Leah Timberlake, and Olivia Whittier

Third Honors: Taylor Murphy

#### Great Falls Middle School

##### Grade 8

Second Honors: Adeline Riley

##### Grade 7

First Honors: Owen LaValley and Regan Marshall

##### Grade 6

Second Honors: Zachary Zilinski

#### Turners Falls High School Academic Awards

Leah Timberlake received an Academic Excellence in Honors English 10.

## Deans' List

Bryn Kruzlic, Bailey McNamara and Zachary Rutz were named to the Dean's List for the spring 2019 semester at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



Martha Kenyon was named to the Dean's Honors List at Connecticut College, New London, CT. She is majoring in English, Class of 2021.

Kelly Sweeney was named to the Dean's List at Simmons University in Boston.

### **Franklin County Technical School**

The Franklin Tech graduated three students from Gill this spring: Nathan Pelletier, Emily Minor and Christopher Urgiel. A Significant Growth Carpentry Award, the Henry T. Kuenzel Memorial Scholarship and a Cooperative Education Acknowledgement were awarded to Nathan Pelletier. The CAD/CAM Growth Award, the Physical Education Award, John & Abigail Adams Scholarship and the Sunderland Volunteer Fireman's Scholarship were awarded to Emily Minor. Christopher Urgiel received the Most Improved in Academics Award, the Donald & Doris Felton Memorial Scholarship and a Cooperative Education Acknowledgement.

### **Northfield Mount Hermon**

Graduating from NMH were Noah Burstein, who was awarded the Piscuskas Day Student Prize, Audrey Corrigan, Rebekah Keator (cum laude), Emily Majewski, Hugh Schatz-Allison and Fiona Tierney.

### **Pioneer Valley Regional School**

Jake Wallace and Rylie Zager graduated from Pioneer this year. Jake received the Jason Peters Memorial Scholarship, Pioneer Valley Regional School Scholarship and a Fred W. Wells Fund Scholarship. Rylie completed the spring semester with a dual enrollment at

Greenfield Community College. She received the Friends of Gill Scholarship.

### **Turners Falls High School**

Reilan Castine and Bryce Waldron graduated from Turners this year. Reilan received the Harriet A. Tidd Scholarship, an Award in Excellence in Film Making and Excellence in Physical Education. Bryce received the Edward Brown Memorial Scholarship and an Excellence in Physical Education Award.

## **Historical Commission**

### **National register of historic districts**

In early July a sign for the newly designated Gill Center Historic District, which is listed on the National Park Service's Register of Historic Places, was installed on the Town Common. This sign was funded by the GHC with additional money from the Gill Cultural Council and the Town, and was constructed by Hale Custom Signs in Riverside. The next step in marking Gill's historic sites will be a similar sign on Route 2 for the Riverside Village Historic District. *GHC reminds everyone that this is an honorary designation and, unlike a local district, places NO restrictions on property owners. The listing comes after a detailed process of research and review at the state and national levels as well as information and discussion meetings to which property owners were invited. This honorary listing is something for which Gill may be extremely proud.*

In the future, GHC would like to have some educational table signs placed on the Common and



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on Route 2 to detail information and photographs about Gill's history. GHC continues to sell copies of Riverside, Life Along the Connecticut River, to help finance projects. GHC also welcomes donations that may be sent to GHC, c/o 325 Main Road, Gill.

### **Painting the Riverside Municipal building**

The Gill Historical Commission applauds the painting of the Riverside Municipal Building with labor through the sheriff's office. The dark green returns the exterior to one of the original colors of the 1926 construction.



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## Volunteer help

Several projects have been completed thanks to the volunteer efforts of Al Wallace, Joanne Dowdy, and Ray and Anna Steele. At the museum, Al has hung a Wert Country Print sign, made several much-needed shelves, securely hung several saws and other items, and helped Bob Perry reconstruct the showcase that the Northfield Historical Society donated last year. Joanne Dowdy used her artistic skill to letter individual certificates for residents whose properties contributed to the listing of the Gill Center on the National Register of Historic Places. Ray and Anna Steele met with Jasmine Gollup, historic researcher working with FirstLight on relicensing, who visited Gill to find more details on the history of Munn's Ferry. If you would like to help GHC members with various projects, please let one of us know. From filing to hammering to researching to typing to helping in all kinds of ways, please speak up.

## Gill's natural historic resources

In 2002 Sergeant Chris Redmond, now Chief, stopped several men from removing fossil prints from the River gorge. The Massachusetts Environmental Police were notified and then retained the slabs as evidence in the case against the alleged thieves. This spring The Greenfield Recorder reported on the gifting by the environmental police of the fossil slabs to the Beneski Museum at Amherst College. The Gill Historical Commission is concerned that the prints were not returned to Gill and has written to the MA Environmental Police to foster better communication and cooperation

in the future. It reads in part:

In the context of our ongoing work, the Gill Historical Commission is of the opinion that fossil evidence confiscated from illegal collection activity on the Gill riverbed should have been offered and returned to the Gill Historical Commission to augment the Town's collection. If FirstLight, as original property owner, did not want these artifacts, then we believe the next logical step should have been to seek out and consult with officials from the Town of Gill rather than contribute them to a private institution that already possesses an extensive collection. That would have allowed the GHC to continue its mission of preserving and educating its residents about their cultural heritage, prehistoric resources, and the grand uniqueness existing in their own backyards. Had we been given the opportunity to weigh in on the subject of the disposition of the fossils, we would have communicated our desire to display those artifacts in our Museum, Town Hall, library, or elementary school for all to view and study.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, Gill has experienced the mining and selling of fossil prints to various museums and educational institutions such as Amherst College. In fact, many of the prints on display at the Beneski originally came from Gill. In recent times, the town has sought to protect its natural and archaeological treasures through creation in the 1970's of a Riverside Archaeological District on the National Register of Historic Places and with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. We



have also worked at times with Northfield Mountain and FirstLight to educate visitors and campers not to take fossil prints as souvenirs from Gill. At all times, we seek to value and protect Gill's resources.

The GHC members intend to visit the collection of Gill fossil rocks at Amherst and hope to arrange for the loan of some prints for educational display in Gill.

### Old Red Bridge

Restoration of the Old Red Bridge site continues. The painting that shows the suspension bridge was taken down this past fall and restored by Jeanne Schermesser and Bryant Stewart, who painted the original using a 1904 postcard. The next step is to build a new frame to secure the painting and new Plexiglas covering. Then the picture of this landmark in Gill's history will be ready for viewing on Riverview Drive at the remaining anchorage, which does contain geologically significant mud balls.

GHC's Riverside, Life Along the Connecticut in Gill, Massachusetts, provides a detailed history of the Red Bridge suspension bridge. The construction was significant. The building of a bridge replaced the ferry between Gill and Turners Falls. Residents could more easily and frequently cross from their residences to businesses, work places, churches, and social activities. Products from the farms in Riverside had easier access to railroads and markets.

The proposed bridge had brought contentious debate for many years. "Numerous hearings were held, petitions signed, and appeals made

to higher courts amid considerable recriminations and accusations by both sides. The county commissioners first ruled for a bridge, then against it." (p. 81 of Riverside book) One Gill leader, Leonard Barton, had to resign from years on the school board because of his active support of the construction. After many years of wrangling, a 550-foot long, single-span suspension bridge was completed in 1878 for the cost of \$42,000. Built in nine months, it was 20 feet above low water. "According to the Greenfield Gazette and Courier, December 30, 1878, the cables and wood were painted white, and the towers were a dark brown. At some point, the bridge became known as the Red Bridge." (p. 82 of Riverside)

By 1930 the bridge was considered unsafe despite some limited repairs, except for limited pedestrian crossings with more damage coming during the flood of 1936. In 1942 the bridge was sold to Macker and Whitney, wreckers, for \$2,000 to demolish it, and the metal was donated to the war effort. (p. 82 Riverside) Terri Rice's 1980's research on the bridge and its remaining anchorages established that the construction by the Roebling Company (New York Bridge Co.) preceded their building of the similar but larger Brooklyn suspension bridge. The ends of the Roebling suspension cables still show in the anchorage. In 1990 the bridge was accepted as a Massachusetts Historical Civil Engineering Landmark. At a ceremony at the anchorage, a plaque was mounted on the rocks.

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