



THE

# Gill Newsletter

Summer 2020 Issue

## Town Hall

### Trash & Recycling Reminders

A big thank you goes out to all of Gill residents for your part in making the transition to a new trash & recycling company so smooth and successful. While there have been a few missed stops, Casella Waste Systems has been very responsive. If you experience a problem with your trash or recycling collection, first please call Casella at 1-800-CASELLA (1-800-227-3552). If the issue remains unresolved, call or email Ray at Town Hall, 413-863-9347 or [administrator@gillmass.org](mailto:administrator@gillmass.org).

If you need another copy of the recycling calendar that shows which weeks paper is collected and which weeks glass, metal, and plastic containers are collected, you can download it from the Town's website: <https://bit.ly/2EdJNVF>

It is important to remember not everything can be recycled, even if you think it should be. Do not put these items in your recycling bins: plastic bags and wrap, shredded paper, aerosol cans, black plastic, plastic trays, Styrofoam, ceramics, paint cans or spray paint cans, auto glass, light bulbs, motor oil jugs, containers larger than 2.5 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. Call or email Ray at Town Hall, 413-863-9347 or [administrator@gillmass.org](mailto:administrator@gillmass.org) to make a request and schedule the pickup.

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

This year's annual Franklin County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day is TENTATIVELY scheduled for Saturday, September 26th. The next "Clean Sweep" bulky waste collection is TENTATIVELY scheduled for Saturday, October 17th. Be sure to check the Solid Waste District's website ([www.franklincountywastedistrict.org](http://www.franklincountywastedistrict.org)) regularly for updates on whether the events will take place.

### Regional Grant to Support Franklin County's Small Businesses

The City of Greenfield, in collaboration with 24 Franklin County municipalities including Gill, has secured \$690,000 of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to create a Regional Microenterprise Assistance Program for small businesses that have suffered negative economic impacts from the required shut-down or restrictions established in March 2020 by Governor Baker's

Declaration of a COVID-19 State of Emergency in Massachusetts. Microenterprise Assistance grants of up to \$10,000 are available to small businesses to cover documented business losses due to the COVID economic shut down that are not covered by other funding programs. Program eligibility criteria include:

1. Microenterprise businesses are those with 5 or fewer employees (including the owner)
2. Business owner's household income is less than 80% HUD median income adjusted by household size
3. Business must be a for-profit business with a physical presence in Franklin County.
4. Businesses must provide goods or services to multiple clients or customers.
5. Businesses must be in good standing with the state and city/town.
6. Business must have been established prior to 1/1/2019 and currently be in operation to the extent allowable under Re-Opening Massachusetts requirements or be actively planning to reopen.
7. Businesses must have annual sales of greater than \$20,000/year.

Businesses interested in learning more about the program or applying for assistance are invited to visit <https://greenfield-ma.gov/cedd> or contact 413-772-1548.



## From the Tax Collector

Hello, my name is Tom Hodak and I am the newly-elected Tax Collector for our town. I would like to thank all those residents who voted for me this past June. With the numerous restrictions in place to keep voters and poll workers safe from the COVID-19 virus, voting took on extra effort and I was pleased to see that so many voters participated. I would also like to thank Doreen Stevens and her army of volunteers who braved the sweltering heat that day.

The Tax Collector's office is currently conducting an overall review of taxes owed to the town, including those from prior years. We will be looking into real estate, personal property, motor vehicle excise and sewer use delinquencies in the near future. The first phase will include real estate delinquency mailings, some of which have arrived in homes the last week of July.

Please know that I am just an email or phone call away if you have any questions that I can help with. My contact info and hours are on the town's website. I'm here for all residents of the town and will do my best to serve you well in the coming years.

## From the Town Clerk

Early voting by mail has come to Massachusetts. If you have not received your Vote by Mail Application and would like to vote by mail, please contact the Town Clerk's office to get an application sent to you. Please follow all

the instructions on the application and your ballots when you receive them. The State has assured us that we will have ballots to mail out by August 3rd. There will also be the option to vote early in person at the Town Hall. Dates and times are listed below as well as the last day you may register to vote in person for the State Primary Election.

### Upcoming Election Dates

#### September 1, 2020 State Primary Election

Last day to register to vote:

Saturday August 22  
2 – 4 PM and 6 – 8 PM

In-person early voting: at the Gill  
Town Hall

Saturday August 22	2 – 4 PM
Sunday August 23	2 – 4 PM
Monday August 24	1 – 3 PM
Tuesday August 25	1 – 3 PM
Wednesday August 26	1 – 3 PM
Thursday August 27	1 – 5 PM
Friday August 28	9 – 11 AM

#### November 3, 2020 Presidential Election

There will be updates about any other changes in the elections on the Gill website and in the Greenfield Recorder and the Montague Reporter.

The town is always looking for election workers if anyone is interested in working at the elections. This is a great way to contribute to our community and get to know your fellow "Gillbillies." Please call the Town Clerk at 413-863-8103 to learn more.

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 election or town meeting. You may register in person, online or by mail (postmarked no later than the final registration date). Voter registration forms are available at the Town Hall or you may register online at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/>

We continue to muddle our way through these challenging times and look forward to the future when things settle into a new routine. Until then stay safe and well.

*Doreen Stevens, Town Clerk*  
413-863-8103

## Gill Fire Department

### Grill Safety

According to the National Fire Safety Protection Association, seven out of every ten adults in the nation have a grill or smoker. This leads to a lot of tasty meals but it also increases the risk of home fires. In the past five years, fire departments across the country went to an average of 8,900 home fires involving grills, hibachis, or barbecues each year, including 3,900 structure fires. For everyone's safety, propane and BBQ grills should only be used outdoors and away from anything that can burn. Keep children and pets a safe distance from the grill area. Keep your grill clean by removing excess grease or fat buildup from the grill surface and in the trays below it. Never add lighter fluid or flammable liquids to a lit grill. Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it and never leave your lit grill unattended.



## House Numbers

The Gill Fire Department's house numbering project is nearly complete. Our firefighters have been placing green reflective street signs near driveways and sidewalks to mark each address in town and help first responders find you in an emergency. Please do your part and keep these signs clear and free from obstructions, like shrubs in the summer or snow in the winter.

## Fireworks

Fireworks are dangerous and they are illegal in Massachusetts for anyone without a professional license. It is against the law for private citizens to use, possess, or sell fireworks in Massachusetts, or to purchase them legally elsewhere and then transport them into the state. Remember that children imitate adults. If you use fireworks, children will copy you, not realizing how dangerous fireworks are. Thirty-eight percent, (38%), of fireworks-related burn injuries reported by hospitals to the Massachusetts State Fire Marshal in the last ten years (2010-2019) were to children under the age of eighteen. Twenty-five percent, (25%), were children under age ten. The penalty for possession or use of fireworks is a fine of up to \$100 and mandatory confiscation.

## Clean Chimneys

If you're already gathering winter wood, take some time to check your heating system and chimney. Creosote, a flammable by-product of combustion, can build up and cause a chimney fire, which can lead to serious damage to your home and injure its occupants. Prevention of these fires

is possible. Have your chimney and wood stove cleaned and inspected at least once each year by a professional.

## Welcome to Gill's New Principal

After five years at the Gill Elementary School, Principal Connor Driscoll has left Gill and taken a position as principal at the Hatfield Elementary School. The new principal, who started her job on July 1, is Lisa Desjarlais. She has served as the principal of the Pelham Elementary School for the last ten years. Before that she taught for sixteen years at Mosier Elementary school in South Hadley. According to reporting in the Greenfield Recorder, Desjarlais served on the advisory council of the Commonwealth's Principal Advisory Council, and she has experience working with special education, mental health and restorative practices. She was attracted to Gill's Elementary School because of its size, and its emphasis on project-based teaching. She begins her tenure here during a worldwide health pandemic, a time of significant challenges to education as schools struggle with decisions about how to teach this fall. The community wishes her well and we look forward to hearing from her in the future as she guides the children, families and teachers of Gill through these interesting times.

## Gill Community Flu Clinic

Planning is underway for a community seasonal flu clinic this fall in a COVID-safe format. Dates have not been set, but look to the [www.gillmass.org](http://www.gillmass.org) and [www.FRCOG.org](http://www.FRCOG.org) websites in mid-September for dates

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and details. Forms will be posted online and will also be available by mail to print and complete prior to arrival. As in past, the seasonal flu clinic will be for all ages.

There are many benefits from flu vaccination and preventing flu is always important, but in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic it is even more important to do everything possible to reduce illnesses and preserve health care resources. For more information, contact Lisa White at lwhite@frcog.org or 413-665-1400 x 114.

## Slate Library News

Slate Library is happy to announce that we are reopening to the public beginning Saturday, August 8. We are ready to welcome back to the library all of our patrons. You have been missed!

We have lots of new books for adults, teens, and children as well as DVD's, magazines, and audiobooks. We will be following all health protocols outlined in Phase 3 of the Commonwealth's reopening plan. That means mandatory face covering and no more than four patrons in the building. We ask that patrons limit their browsing to 15 minutes at a time. In this way, we believe we can offer a safe socially-distant browsing opportunity within our library. Our Wi-Fi is accessible at all times, both within and outside of the library.

The library will be open Tuesdays 2-6 PM, Thursdays 2-8 PM, and Saturdays 10-2 PM.

Come replenish your supply of books and check out what's happening at the best little library in the center of town!

## Town Forest

Did you know that there are at least sixteen different varieties of ferns growing in our Town Forest? Gill resident Catherine LaFleur has created a Fern Booklet, now available at the kiosk, designed to enhance your knowledge as you walk. We only ask that you return the booklets to the bird house for other people to enjoy. Copies are available for purchase through contacting the Town Hall.

## HONOR ROLL

### Dean's List

**Sophia Margola** was named to the Dean's List during the fall semester at St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York.

**Martha Kenyon** was named to the Dean's List at Connecticut College for the spring semester. Martha, a member of the Class of 2021, is majoring in English.

**Ethan Shilo-Draper** was named to the Dean's List for the spring semester at Vermont Technical College in Randolph Center.

### College Graduates

Greenfield Community College Although the traditional graduation this year will be held in December, Gill residents **Ashley Levasseur**, **Steven Sinkoff** and **Benjamin Tufano** graduated this spring.

### Northfield Mount Hermon

Northfield Mount Hermon held a virtual commencement on May 24th for its 2020 graduates. We are very proud to announce **Maia Castro Santos** was the class Valedictorian and **Ella Bathory-**

**Peeler** was a co-Salutatorian. Maia received the Art Purchase Prize, Cum Laude and Ella received The Florence Chapman Haslun Prize, Cum Laude.

**Marina Keator** received the Joseph T. Elliott Jr Prize in Music, the Piscuskas Day Student Prize, Cum Laude and **Althea Tierney**, the NMH Resident Leader Award, Cum Laude. **Connor Theriault** and **Jack Theriault** also graduated this spring.

### Franklin County Technical School

Ethan Courchesne graduated this year and received the Proficiency Award in Electrical Trade; future electrician for us.

## COVID Housing Assistance Resources

Several programs are available for Franklin County households to help pay for housing-related and other expenses during the COVID pandemic. Many people may benefit from these programs who previously have not applied for any housing assistance.

### Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) and Emergency Rental & Mortgage Assistance (ERMA)

These programs are for individuals and families at risk of being displaced or forced to leave their homes due to COVID-19 employment loss. RAFT and ERMA can provide eligible households up to \$4,000 to help keep their housing, obtain new housing, or otherwise avoid becoming homeless, regardless of source of income or lack of income. RAFT is targeted to



households up to 50% AMI while ERMA focuses on households between 50-80% AMI. Families, individuals, and unaccompanied youth are eligible based on income, and can receive up to \$4,000 in a 12-month period to be used for past-due rental or mortgage payments, short-term rental stipends, first and last month's rent, and security deposits.

There is a single application process for RAFT and ERMA. Households seeking assistance will first be asked about their household income. If their income is below 80% AMI, they will begin the RAFT/ERMA application. If their gross income exceeds 80% AMI, they will be referred to other resources. Learn more or apply at [www.fcrhra.org](http://www.fcrhra.org) or call 413-863-9781 ext. 150.

Community Action of Pioneer Valley can provide assistance to Franklin and Hampshire County residents who need help with utility bills, rent, water/sewer bills, hot water, internet, and SNAP applications. Eligibility and assistance is based on gross household income, and applications can be made over the telephone. Learn more at [www.communityaction.us](http://www.communityaction.us) or 413-475-1570.

## GMEF Annual Gala Rescheduled to 2021

Due to the uncertainty of the pandemic, the Gill-Montague Education Fund will host "The Legend of Johnny Cash" featuring Philip Bauer at their 2021 Annual Gala on Saturday April 24. Philip will bring the sound and charisma of The Man in Black to life in his 90-minute stage show backed by his four-piece touring band. Stay tuned for updates.



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