



THE

Gill Newsletter

Summer 2021 Issue

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Tributes from Town Meeting

It is customary at Gill's Annual Town Meetings to pay tribute to people who have provided significant service to the Town. On June 26th the following tributes were made by Town Clerk Doreen Stevens and Town Administrator Ray Purington:

I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words about **Leland Stevens**. As many of you know Leland was my father-in-law, and he passed away on March 6, 2021. Dad served 15 years as a selectman for the Town of Gill. Before that he served on the Planning Board, and he also served on the Cable Committee during his time on the Selectboard. Dad enjoyed his years of service as he was always looking out for the Town's best interests. He set a great example as a Town servant, inspiring not only his son Gary, but also myself to step up as public servants. One did not have to agree with Dad to admire his passion and dedication to the Town of Gill. His is a voice that will be missed. (Tribute given by Doreen Stevens)

The past 15 months have been a test of the human spirit as we struggled through and endured the COVID-19 pandemic locally, nationally, and globally. I'd like to recognize and thank the members of **Gill's Police Department and Fire Department, along with Regional Health Agent and Selectboard member Randy Crochier**, for their dedicated service and leadership. In such tumultuous times, we are very fortunate to have them on duty, keeping us safe and healthy as a Town and as individuals. Thank you. (Tribute given by Ray Purington)

John Ward served our Town on the Selectboard for 12 years from 2009 until this past May when he decided to not run for a fifth term. He was a political newcomer in 2009, having never served on any other Gill board or committee, and it was a bit of a surprise when he unseated a longtime Selectman in his first run for office.

Government transparency, fiscal responsibility, and environmental consciousness are three of his core principals and he stuck to them every day he was in office. I have a great deal of respect for John and want to share two principles I've observed working alongside John at "the big table at the front of the room:"

1. There are times when you have to make the decision that is best for the Town, even when the outcome is not the one you personally want, and
2. The best teamwork happens not with unanimous votes but with the trust and respect of and for those with whom you serve.

Thank you for everything you've done for our Town, John, and thank you for everything you've helped us do. (Tribute given by Ray Purington)

Check in with the Gill Website

www.gillmass.org

for up to date news, announcements and contact information!



I first met **Lynda Hodsdon Mayo** in 2008 when I became an Assessor, and had the privilege of working with her for 13 years. I can confidently say you will not find another person with a love of Gill greater than hers. As our Town Clerk for 16 years and our Assessors' Clerk for 16 as well, she watched over both offices with a gentle kindness.

Lynda loves helping others, and it is always so wonderful to see her smile spread across her face as she shares good news. Her eyes twinkle when she describes her plans for a long weekend – time to spend in her flower gardens and kitchen, and with her family. Lynda fully retired at the end of May to be able to spend more time with her family, and fittingly, that's where she is today, with one of her grandsons.

Public servants of Lynda's caliber do not come along often, and Gill is blessed to have had her as one of ours. (Tribute given by Ray Purington)

Town Hall – Open for Business

Town Hall has reopened to the public for walk-in visits. Face coverings are required for individuals who are not fully vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine. Please remember that each department has different office hours. You may want to call ahead of time to make sure the person you want to see will be available at the time of your visit.

New to Town?

Are you one of the many people who have moved to Gill during the past year? If so, welcome! Please be sure

to sign up for the Town's CodeRED emergency notification service. We use this system to provide residents with time-sensitive general and emergency notifications for such things as town events, changes to the trash/recycling collection schedule, hazardous traffic or road conditions, detours, flooding, emergency shelters, or evacuation notices.

There is no deadline to sign up. If you haven't added your telephone numbers (landline and cell), text numbers, and email addresses, visit the Town's website, and click on the link for CodeRED. If you don't have access to the internet, or need assistance with signing up, call Ray at the Town Hall, 413-863-9347.

Trash Stickers by Mail

If any resident wants to purchase trash stickers by mail, send a check payable to Town of Gill along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Town Hall, 325 Main Road, Gill, MA 01354. Trash stickers are \$3 apiece. Please include a note or indicate on your check that you are purchasing trash stickers. Trash stickers continue to be available at the following locations during their posted business hours: Upinngil, Spirit Shoppe, The Mill, and Scotty's.

Recycling Bins & Compost Pails

Recycling bins – the free ones – are now available at the Town Hall. There is a limit of one per household; additional bins can be purchased for \$5 each. Kitchen compost pails are also available free of charge at the Town Hall, with a limit of one per household.

Highlights from the Annual Town Meeting

This year's Annual Town Meeting was held on Saturday, June 26 outside under a tent at the Gill Elementary School. There were 51 voters in attendance who conducted all of the business in three hours. Among the highlights:

- Approved a Fiscal Year 2022 operating budget for the Town and approved the assessments for the Gill-Montague Regional School District and the Franklin County Technical School
- Approved a 1.3% cost-of-living increase for all Town employees and elected officials
- Authorized spending up to \$300,000 to remove asbestos vinyl tile from the Gill Elementary School and to install a new epoxy floor (hopefully most/all of the cost will be covered by federal funds from the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund)
- Authorized spending \$6,489 as Gill's share of the cost to resurface the tennis courts at the Turners Falls High School
- Added \$28,439 to an account saving toward a roof replacement project at the Elementary School
- Approved \$7,500 to be used to conduct a building condition assessment of the Elementary School
- Voted for the Town to become a member of the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District
- Funded \$2,200 into an account to begin saving for the purchase of a new



electronic vote tabulator to replace the one we bought used in 2006

- Authorized spending up to \$205,000 to purchase a new dump/plow truck for the Highway Department (truck was ordered on July 20 and is expected to be received in early January)
- Added \$20,000 to an account to be used to address basement wetness issues at the Town Hall
- Placed \$256,489 into the Town's various Stabilization Funds

Thanks again to each and every person who attended and participated in the governance of our town.

Slate Library News

Slate Library is open and happy to see smiling faces! We welcome everyone into the library to check out new exciting summer titles and DVDs. If you are vaccinated you are no longer required to wear a mask upon entry to the library. Non-vaccinated patrons, please continue to wear your mask or avail yourself of a free mask upon entrance. Most importantly, come visit your local library; we would love to see you!

This year is the 100th anniversary of Slate Memorial library! We have waited to celebrate and now are happy to announce a "Centenary Celebration of Slate" on Saturday, September 25, in conjunction with the Gill Fall Harvest Festival. Please stop by the library to see our remarkable renovation which was completed pre-COVID and familiarize yourself with all we have to offer. We have the latest New York Times Best Sellers and a wonderful collection of books and graphic novels for

teens and children. You can always find Academy and Emmy award nominated programming in our collection and the perfect book or movie to snuggle up with on a rainy day.

During the month of August we will continue our Summer Reading Program for Kids. Stop by and pick up a game board and earn prizes for your reading! There is always an art project on the children's table for kids to explore, so a library visit is a fun and engaging summer destination.

The library is open Tuesday 2-6 p.m., Wednesday 3-7 p.m., Thursday 2-8 p.m. and Saturday 10-2 p.m. For questions regarding our collection or the Centennial Celebration, please call (413) 863-2591 or gill.slate.library@gmail.com

Jocelyn Castro-Santos
Director, Slate Library

Notes from Gill Church

The Scatter Garden Cemetery behind the church in the center of town is available to anyone who wishes to scatter cremains and place a memorial marker. We invite you visit the site anytime.

Church services are now held at 9:30 on Sunday mornings.

The church basement was slightly flooded due to the recent rains, therefore we have decided to repaint the floor along with other cleanup projects. There are 6 12' by 33" hardwood heavy tables we are planning to replace. They are in fair-to-good condition. Anyone interested in them should contact Gary Bourbeau at 413 768-9543.

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Gill Harvest Festival

Join Your Neighbors at the 2nd Annual Gill Harvest Festival!

- The Fire Department will provide food and drink
- Farm activities for all ages!
- Gill farms and farmers will display the fruits, vegetables and meats of their labors
- There will be tractors to climb and hay wagons to ride
- Search for coins in the sawdust

Plus more, much more!

Sunday September 26, 2021
12 – 3 p.m.

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. Ag Commission Members are Ray Steele (Chair), Roger Augustine, Tom Chalmers, Dick French, Ed Golembeski, Gary Stevens and Hanna Sol.

Blake Town Forest

It was wonderful to see the Blake Town Forest become a refuge for so many during the pandemic. Users of the forest are reminded ATV's and similar vehicles are not allowed because they erode the trails. Camping and fires are not permitted in the forest.

For those who have not yet visited the Blake Town Forest, the main parking area is located at 76 Hoe Shop Road. There is a kiosk with information about the forest and trail maps to help you find your way around.

Adequate protection from mosquitoes and ticks is especially important during summer months. Please be sure to wear a repellent like DEET that works against both mosquitos and ticks, and do a tick check after spending time outside.

Mosquito Control

At the Town Meeting in June voters approved joining the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District (PVMCD), an organization that works to protect residents of Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin counties from mosquito-borne illnesses such as West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). One of the services the District will provide to Gill is regular trapping and testing of mosquitos in our town. The data from the testing will allow the District and town officials to make informed decisions regarding the levels and locations of mosquitos in our town, and take appropriate steps to help prevent disease outbreaks.

Earlier this spring the Selectboard, with the backing of the Conservation Commission and the Board of Health, voted to submit an application to opt out of mosquito spraying conducted by the state during 2021. We were required to submit an alternative plan which has now been approved by the state. The plan includes joining the PVMCD and reminding residents of mosquito prevention tips:

- Dump standing water near home. Mosquitoes need water to breed but need only a half inch of water to lay eggs.

- Keep mosquitoes outside – use the screens on your windows and doors.
- Use repellent like DEET. Essential oils like peppermint and eucalyptus in small dishes near where you are sitting outside can help.
- Know that mosquitoes use tall grass, shrubs, bushes, and clutter as resting places.

MassDPH videos on YouTube:

Mosquitoes and Ticks - They're Out in Mass!

Protect Yourself From Mosquito Bites

Keep Mosquitoes Out of Your Home and Yard

Apply Repellents Safely and Effectively

Wellness Clinics Resume

Monthly Walk-In Wellness Clinics are resuming September 10 and each Second Friday of the month in the Stoughton Place Community Room from 10 a.m. - 12:00 noon. Regional public health nurses Lisa White, RN and Meg Ryan, RN staff the clinic. There are no out-of-pocket costs to residents for this service which is provided by the Town's membership in Franklin Regional Council of Governments Cooperative Public Health Service.

Services offered include:

- Blood pressure screening, weight, pulse oximetry
- Help connecting to needed health and social services
- Sharps collection/box exchange
- Mosquito and tick bite prevention/testing info



Northfield Mount Hermon

Emaline Reyea-Strawn, Sylvia Schatz-Allison, Thalia Schodel, Jacob Smith and Julie Sprankle graduated from NMH in May.

Co-Salutatorian, Cum Laude

Emaline Relyea-Strawn received The Marshall E. Climan Award, and The Viva Faye Richardson Piano Award. Sylvia Schatz-Allison received The Jo Dorchester Award and Jacob Smith received The David Michael Walker Prize in Music.

Pioneer Valley Regional School

Tyler Arsenault graduated from PVRS and received the Training Active Bystanders Senior Leader Award.

Turners Falls High School

Valedictorian Leah Timberlake, Taylor Murphy, Karissa Olson, Hailey Wheeler and Olivia Whittier graduated from TFHS this year.

Leah Timberlake received The Valedictorian Award, The President’s Award for Academic Excellence, a TFHS Class of 2021 Scholastic Merit Award, an Excellence in Design Build Award and an Excellence in Graphic Arts Award.

Taylor Murphy received the Edward Brown Memorial Scholarship, Gill-Montague Education Association Scholarship, Women’s Club of Turners Falls Scholarship and a Wells Trust Fund Scholarship.

Karissa Olson received Dual Degrees from Turners Falls High School and Greenfield Community College, The Friends of Gill Scholarship, Gilmond Lamore Memorial Scholarship, TFHS Class of 1964 Scholarship and a Wells Trust Fund Scholarship.

Hailey Wheeler received an Excellence in English Award, Excellence in Spanish Award, Excellence in Yearbook Award, Society of Women Engineers of Boston Award and a Wells Trust Fund Scholarship.

Olivia Whittier received The President’s Award for Academic Achievement, Most Valuable Players Award for Girls Swimming, The Harriet A. Tidd Memorial Scholarship, a Mery O’Brien Memorial Scholarship, Turners Falls Athletic Club Scholarship, a TFHS Class of 1964 Scholarship, and a Wells Trust Fund Scholarship.

National Honor Society

National Honor Society members from Gill are Karissa Olson, Hailey Wheeler and Olivia Whittier.

Junior Book Awards

The Junior Book Awards were presented at Senior Awards Night and Hannah Marchefka received the Williams College Book Award.

HONOR ROLL

Four Rivers Charter Public School

1st Sememster

Grade 12

High Honors: Carlie Kempf

Grade 10

Honors: Isaac Morton, Grace Parzyck and Olivia Vassar

Grade 9

Honors: Alex Shutta

Grade 8

Highest Honors: Charley Cormier

Grade 7

Honors: Grace Mackenzie and Zachary Robertson
HOWLS (Strong Habits of Work and Learning):
Charley Cormier, Kobe Broderick, Isaac Morton,
Grace Parzyck and Carlie Kempf

Pioneer Valley Regional School

3rd and 4th Quarter

Grade 11

Highest Honors: Isaac Damon

Grade 10

Highest Honors: James Staelens

Grade 7

Highest Honor: Anthony McNamara,
Elizabeth Polatin and Charlotte Relyea-Strawn
Honor: Taj Diaby

Turners Falls High School

4th Quarter

Grade 12

First Honors: Leah Timberlake, Hailey Wheeler
and Olivia Whittier

Grade 10

Second Honors: Anna Baskowski and Adeline Riley

Grade 9

Second Honors: Owen LaValley

Great Falls Middle School

4th Quarter

Grade 8

First Honors: Josiah Little

Second Honors: Pamela Gomez

Grade 7

First Honors: Lincoln Coleman, Shayla Freeland,
Christopher Halla, Vaughn LaValley, Emma Little
and Miles Riley

Second Honors: Dylan Brunault and Kainen
Stevens



Gill Historical Commission

Letter to Perley R. Johnson (1880-1955) in Warwick by his cousin Ernest Blake (1881-1952) in Gill.

Feb. 16, 1898

Dear Perley,
Your Christmas card was duly received but you did not write a letter. My grandmother [Caroline (Johnson) Blake] has been expecting you or some of your folks down this way ever since you left Mr. Conant's [now the Lilys' Just a Dream Farm on Main Road]. Everyone is well over this way and I hope the same of Warwick [Caroline Blake and David Conant's wife Amelia, were Johnson sisters from Warwick]. I suppose you knew that Mr. Conant's horse died on Thanksgiving Day. Mr. Conant went to Greenfield the day before and the horse was taken sick immediately after reaching home, so of course someone poisoned it. The horse doctor called it indigestion. They have been using the old horse since and a fine time they must have had with it drawing wood. Charles Barker, Mr. Conant's nephew, has been working there a few weeks but has gone away and no one is working there now.

The high school [Turners Falls High School] has had a sleigh ride and I went. We went to South Deerfield

starting from Turners Falls at two and having a supper at the hotel. After supper we played games and danced until ten o'clock when we started back reaching our starting point at half past twelve. I stayed in Turners Falls over night with my school teacher and second cousin Mr. Phillips.

They are having a singing school at the town hall every Wednesday night but the foot of snow that came last night is drifting so that I do not think that there will be any tonight.

I suppose you have seen Miss [Alice] Fletcher, the new school teacher, at church. Walter [Clapp] went home with her the other night from a social at Riverside. [Alice Fletcher from Sherborn, MA (1867-1932) married Walter Clapp (1867-1937) on October 9, 1899.]

Mother [Emma (Phillips) Blake] sends regards.

Yours truly, Ernest Blake

N.B. Ernest Blake's letter is part of a collection of Blake Family memorabilia, recently given by Dick French, grandson of Walter and Alice Clapp, to the Gill Historical Commission. Further information on the Blake, Conant, and Clapp families is contained in the recently published book, Jennie Williams Bardwell: Life in Gill 1860 to 1950.

The Robert Darr Wert Project

GHC members are continuing to develop a project that describes and documents the colorful designs made by Robert Darr Wert and his Country Prints business on Gill's River Road. A number of Gill residents have shared photographs of their Wert items for GHC's inventory. Fritz Kaufhold's son Peter has generously shared information and memories as have the Wert's daughter Sara and former Country Prints workers. Wert Collector and researcher Pete Mars in Rhode Island intends to visit to help us better understand what images in our inventory are unique and to share his knowledge with interested residents. As GHC plans form, we welcome your ideas. Please contact Kit Carpenter at 413-863-2505 or Pam Shoemaker at pshoe27@gmail.com.

Books available for sale

Copies of both GHC books are still available at the Gill Town Hall. Riverside: Life Along the Connecticut River (donation of \$45) and the new Jennie Williams Bardwell: Life in Gill 1860 to 1950 (donation of \$50). Order forms from the Town's website may be sent with checks to GHC at the Town Hall. Local delivery is arranged; priority mailing is available for \$8. Copies of the older History of Gill, Volume 2 are also available for \$10 at the Town Hall.



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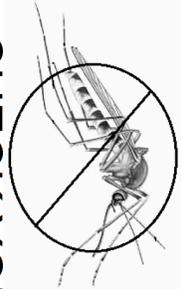
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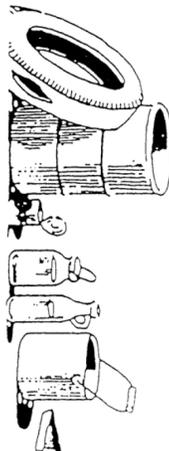


HOW YOU CAN STOP MOSQUITOES!

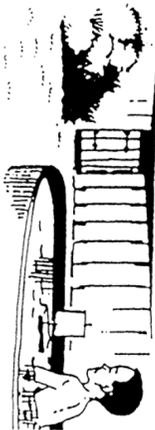
CHECK YOUR YARD & HOME...

If there are any places around your home where water collects, such as water holding containers, plastic tarps on wood piles, old boats and ornamental ponds - **YOU MAY BE RAISING MOSQUITOES!**

You should... Get rid of old tires, tin cans, bottles, jars, buckets, drums and other containers, or empty them on a weekly basis.



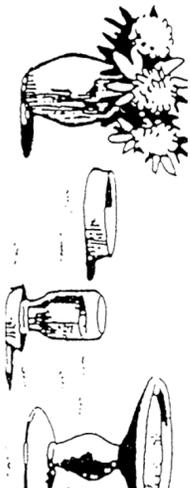
You should... Empty your small toddler-size plastic wading pool weekly and store it indoors when not in use. Make certain your backyard swimming pool is properly cared for while on vacation.



You should... Repair leaky pipes, outside faucets, and move basement sump drain hoses frequently if water pools at the outlet.



You should... Change water and scrub vases holding flowers or cuttings twice each week - or grow cuttings in sand; scrub and change water in bird baths twice weekly; empty water pans for pets daily.



Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project 111 Old Street Northborough, MA
tel: (508) 393-3055 • fax: (508) 393-8492 • web: www.cmmcp.org