



THE

Gill Newsletter

Winter 2024 Issue

Disclaimer:

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From the Town Clerk's Office

The Town Clerk's office is looking forward to an active election year. The presidential primary will be held March 5; local elections on May 20th; state primaries are scheduled for September 3rd; and it all culminates with the presidential and state elections November 5. The town is always looking for election workers. If anyone is interested in working the elections please call the Town Clerk. This is a great way to contribute to our community and get to know your fellow "Gillbillies."

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.

Vote-by-Mail postcard applications have been sent out by the state to all registered voters. Please return them promptly if you want to Vote-by-Mail, and follow all instructions on the card to avoid rejection. Applications are also available on line at www.sec.state.ma.us, and at the Town Clerk's office.

Once you receive your ballots in the mail, please follow all instructions to avoid rejection of your ballot. Return your ballots as promptly as possible; **all ballots must be returned to the Town Clerk's office by 8 PM on Election Day in order to be counted.** (6 PM for Town Election)

Presidential Primary

March 5, 2024 7 AM-8PM

- **Early Voting and voter registration will be held upstairs at the Town Hall**

- **2/24/2024** - Last Day to Register to Vote/Make Changes to Voter Registration
- **In-Person Early Voting Hours:**
2/24/2024 Saturday 9-11AM & 3-5PM;
2/26/2024 Monday 1-3PM;
2/27/2024 Tuesday 1-3PM;
2/28/2024 Wednesday 1-3PM;
2/29/2024 Thursday 3-6PM

Annual Town Election

May 20, 2024 10AM-6PM

- **4/10/2024** - Last day to register to vote/make changes to Voter Registration
- **THERE IS NO EARLY VOTING FOR THIS ELECTION**

Offices on the ballot this May are:

Selectboard 3-year term: Charles J. Garbiel; **Assessor 3-year term:** Thomas Storrow; **Cemetery Commissioner 3-year term:** Joan I. Pillsbury; **Moderator 3-year term:** Isaac A. Bingham; **Library Trustee 3-year term:** Anna Henricks; **Library Trustee 1-year term:** Jacob Morrow; **Board of Health 3-year term:** Jeffrey Blomstedt; **Town Clerk 3-year term:** Doreen J. Stevens.



Check in with the Gill Website

www.gillmass.org

for up to date news,
announcements and
contact information!





Nomination papers are available at the Town Clerk’s Office for anyone who would like to run for any of these offices. The last day to obtain nomination papers is Thursday, March 28, 2024.

**State Primary
September 3, 2024**

**State/Presidential Election
November 5, 2024**

Please remember to send back your census forms and make any changes necessary. Making sure census information is up to date is vital to keeping your voter status active and ensuring 911 emergency services has current information about number of people in your home. This information is critical in case of fire or other emergencies.

Dog licenses are available in the Clerk’s Office.

Doreen Stevens - Town Clerk, Notary Public, Justice of the Peace
Office hours: Monday 9AM to 4PM;
Tuesday 9AM to 1PM; Wednesday 9AM to 3PM;
Thursday 3PM to 5PM; other times by
appointment. 413-863-8103

Slate Library News

The library is happy to announce the following upcoming events. On Saturday, February 10 the library will hold its annual Valentine card-making workshop. Come play with paper, markers, glitter and glue and make someone special a handmade valentine. Our make-and-take table is open for all ages and all materials are free.

The library is also happy to host a series of Gill History events with programming planned by the Gill Historical Commission. Please see their announcement in this

newsletter for more information. Not mentioned on the flyer is a program on April 6 — Slave, Student and Gill Minister: Dr. Thomas Nelson Baker.

Please stop by for this exciting programming and let us know what subjects you would like to learn more about at your local library. We want to hear from you!

Jocelyn Castro-Santos
Director, Slate Library
(413)863-2591

Board of Health

Impacted by opioids?

We want to hear from you!

On behalf of your Board of Health, you are invited to a virtual listening session on Monday, February 5th at 6:30 pm. The opioid listening session is a way for our families, friends and neighbors to voice their ideas on how to address the harms of the opioid crisis. Because opioid manufacturers and pharmacies are settling lawsuits, funds are available. While the majority of these funds are going to state-wide initiatives and programs, a smaller amount of money is going directly to Gill and other towns. Many of our lives have been touched by substance use disorders and no idea is too big or too small. People are able to provide anonymous feedback in two ways: providing written feedback into the registration form, or by attending the Zoom session and changing their name and turning their camera off. Register for the event by going to frcog.org/event-calendar and clicking on Monday, Feb 5th.

Improving Heart Health

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women,

according to the CDC, killing about 1 in about every 4 people it affects. Our individual risk for heart disease comes from both our family history and our lifestyle.

Luckily, even small lifestyle changes made over time can lead to big improvements in heart health. Steps to improve heart health include: scheduling and maintaining routine medical care, exercising regularly, choosing healthy foods, limiting salt intake, and reducing or quitting smoking. Does some of this information sound similar? Our bodies are interconnected—so what’s good for the heart can also be good for the lungs, brain, and other organs!

One resource for heart-healthy recipes is the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute’s website: <https://healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov>.

Heart attack is serious and can be deadly. If you see signs of heart attack, call 9-1-1 immediately. A heart attack may not be the dramatic movie scene of someone grabbing their chest. Here are some symptoms of heart attack:

- chest pain
- feeling weak/lightheaded or faint
- Pain in the jaw, neck or back
- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms or shoulders
- Shortness of breath

Signs can look different in men and women. Breaking out into a cold sweat, feeling like a rope is squeezing the chest, upper back pressure, and dizziness may be important-to-identify symptoms in women.

More on the American Heart Association website, heart.org.



Gill Cultural Council News

The Massachusetts Cultural Council has finalized the 2024 grants approved for funding by the Gill Cultural Council. In choosing grantees we fund those applications we feel will be of most interest and benefit to those living and working in our town.

Annual applications are available on the Massachusetts Cultural Council website in late summer. We welcome applications from artists and cultural practitioners in the town of Gill, and from persons or organizations whose work you feel would benefit those living in Gill. Please spread the word about this process!

Grants for 2024

The Nolumbeka Project, Inc.

Full Snow Moon Gathering and Eastern Woodlands Social Dance — Participatory dance **February 24** (snow date Feb. 25) at Greenfield Community College

Pioneer Valley Symphony, Inc.

“Oliver Towne” - 2024 Education Concert — Regional In-School event, Thursday **April 11** at Greenfield HS

The Performance Project, Inc.

“Mother Tongue” by First Generation Ensemble — Evolving performance including movement, music, dance, and stories by First Generation Youth. **April 2024** at the Shea Theater

Anna Hendricks *How do YOU dance?* — Dance classes for Kindergarten/2nd Grade classes at Gill Elementary School **April/May 2024**

Alden Booth *One Man Circus In a Suitcase* — Performance for children 3 and up, with parents. **Spring/Summer 2024** Gill location TBA

Franklin County Pride, Inc. *Franklin County Pride 2024* — Regional event Parade and Activities **June 2024** at Energy Park in Greenfield

Marshall Escamilla

Discovering Dinosaurs in the Pioneer Valley: A Place-Based Science Podcast for Kids — **September 2024**, with specific “listening stops” in Gill and other local towns.

Town of Gill *Town of Gill Square Dance* — Dance in Town Hall Saturday **October 26th** in the evening

Antenna Cloud Farm, Inc. *Antenna Cloud Farm Music Festival & Retreat* www.antennacloudfarm.com — Events in Gill and nearby. Dates through October 2024

Energy Commission

Join the Community Choice Power Supply Program and lock in your supply rate.

A new round of electricity rates and terms has begun for Gill and 15 other towns in the area through the Community Choice Power Supply Program. Rate changes will occur and be reflected in the February 2024 electric bill. Dynegy Energy Services is the Community Choice electricity supplier. Those who opt-in will continue to get their electric bills from Eversource with Dynegy listed under the “supplier services” section of the bill.

Anyone who has Eversource or Dynegy as their electricity supplier can choose to opt-in or opt-out of the Community Choice at any time, at no charge, by calling Dynegy at (866) 220-5696.

Joining the Community Choice will lock in your rates through January 2026. Check the Gill website (gillmass.org under “important links”) to review the

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current options and rates. If you have questions please call: Janet Masucci at (413) 863-8694 or Vicky Jenkins at (413) 325-5722.

HONOR ROLL

Pioneer Valley Regional School

First Quarter

Grade 8

Highest Honor: Daein Kim
High Honor: Benjamin Peila

Turners Falls High School

First Quarter

Grade 12

Second Honors: Noah DeLorenzo and Owen LaValley

Grade 11

Second Honors: Sherri Ovalle
Roblero

Grade 10

First Honors: Ella DeLorenzo, Lily DeLorenzo, Vaughn LaValley and Kainen Stevens
Second Honors: Rojelio Galvas Mendez, Christopher Halla and Caleb Lincoln

Great Falls Middle School

First Quarter

Grade 8

First Honors: Maison Haight, Jonathan Holmes and Jocelyn Ovalle Roblero
Third Honors: Alaina Halla

Grade 7

First Honors: Santiago Buri Rosales and Owen Zilinski
Second Honors: Allison Raymond
Third Honors: Bristol Stevens

DEAN'S LIST

Kole S. Broderick was named to the dean's list at Fitchburg State University for the fall semester.

Gill Historical Commission

Gift-Giving

The Historical Commission (GHC) has two books that make thoughtful gifts for all occasions. *Life Along the Connecticut River* covers the Riverside part of Gill from geology and dinosaurs to building the French King Bridge in 1938. The second book spans life in Gill from 1860 to 1930 with Jennie Williams Bardwell's family letters, two 1870s diaries and many pictures. Both are available for a donation of \$50 each at the Town Hall and on the GHC website. Copies of *The History of Gill, vol. 2* are available for \$10 each.

Historical Trivia: Civil War Tax Stamps

The popular mid-19th century photograph, known as carte de visite or CDV, usually has a stamp on it. These stamps date from 1864 to 1866. The Union used these tax stamps to raise revenue for the Civil War.

SAVE THE DATE - April 20

Saturday afternoon from 1 - 3 PM, Town Hall, 2nd floor

Come hear a talk by the Gravestone Girls about the art and beliefs shown on New England gravestones, followed by an optional guided walk through Gill's Center Cemetery.

Death heads with crossed bones or wings, winged hourglasses, coffins with carved panels of flowers and fruit, winged cherubs, portrait stones and willows and urns - what does it all mean? What does their use tell us in 2024 about earlier historical attitudes toward death and living? Come and find out on April 20.

GILL HISTORY JOINS WITH SLATE LIBRARY:

See the enclosed insert and join your Gill neighbors to tell stories and learn about our town and its past.

HELP GILL PRESERVE ITS HISTORY:

Talk with GHC about how you can become a member or help with a project. Volunteer time is flexible. For example, a volunteer is currently working one morning a week to scan old deeds and make an inventory of them. Another is helping with filing newspaper clippings.

FRENCH KING BRIDGE RAILING: GHC has several sections of railing from 1938 to preserve and display. Ideas are welcome.

GHC AND FACEBOOK: Remember to look at Gill's history on social media. The lead article changes monthly and the frequent Facebook entries inform and challenge your historic knowledge. Visit these sites often!

SEVERANCE HOUSE: GHC continues to encourage NMH to preserve and renovate 551 Main Road instead of demolishing it.

Grass Hill, later D. L. Moody's Mount Hermon, belonged to Northfield before Gill's founding in 1793. The center of Gill was not located until Grass Hill was part of Gill and its geographic center could be located with a common and meetinghouse.

By all accounts, the Severance family first farmed on Bennett's Meadow and Grass Hill, where Ebenezer Severance was killed by a Native attack. Undeterred, the Severance descendants farmed the area for subsequent generations.

The connection between Ebenezer and Charles Severance, who lived at



what is now 551 Main Road, follows:

- Ebenezer (killed) 1673-1723
- Ebenezer (his son) 1709-1791
- Abner (son) 1744-1825
- Obed (son) 1792-1869
- Charles Severance (son) 1833-1911
- Wife Sarah died 1904.
- Children: Ida Purple Park, Adeline Louise Canning, Elizabeth Belle Bullard, and son Charles Severance

When Charles Sr. died he no longer lived at his Gill residence but with a daughter in Vernon

A number of years prior to the founding of Mount Hermon (1881), the farmhouse appears on the 1858 Gill map as the residence of Gill farmer Charles Severance. The federal censuses show Charles living there with his wife, widowed mother, and children for the decades before 1890. The 1870 records show that Gill assessed taxes on his house, barns, sheds, and animals. His widowed mother paid taxes on the land.

The structure may have had two barns on the western end. Perhaps they were constructed by local barn builder Gardner James Oakes from Bernardston, who built a barn on a neighboring Purple property and in 1894-5 was building the Old Stone Lodge on Main Road, Gill.

A newspaper reports that D. L. Moody knocked on Charles Severance's door in 1890 to inquire about buying the house and 20 acres for his Boys' School. After that conversation, Severance House and its land came into the ownership of Mr. Moody's School about when Memorial Chapel and Overtoun Hall were built up on Grass Hill.

2024 GMEF Annual Gala Piano Men: Double Bill --"Billy & Elton!"

The Gill-Montague Education Fund (GMEF) is excited to welcome the Piano Men: Double Bill --"Billy & Elton!" to the Turners Falls High School Theater on Saturday, April 27, 2024 at 7:00pm. Anton Doran and The Tampa Bay All Stars will re-create the music of Billy Joel and Elton John with material from all eras of each artist's career, presenting their biggest hits including: "Benny & the Jets," "Tiny Dancer," "Movin' Out," "You May Be Right," "I'm Still Standing," "Piano Man" and many more. Advance tickets \$30— **available NOW** on the GMEF website: www.thegmef.org. Tickets will also be available at several outlets Friday, March 1st . Check website for locations.


2024 Enrichment Grant Recipients:

- \$499 – GILL ELEMENTARY/Kelly Gobeil & Lauren Steer
- \$500 – HILLCREST/Lea Wulfkuhle & Kristy Smith - Creative & Cooperative Games for Recess
- \$500 – HILLCREST/Veronica Hirst - Math-Play Tote
- \$500 – SHEFFIELD/Britney Skiff & Elizabeth Tyler - Drumming Alive for Health & Wellness
- \$280 - SHEFFIELD/Susan Pelis - Local Author Visit @ Astrid Sheckels MatLab
- \$135 – TFHS/Megan Bendiksen - Classics Day for Latin Students

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Gill History at Slate Library

Tales of Farming in Gill

With Gary Stevens, Ernie Hastings and Others



Listen to tales of farming in Gill's past and share your own memories.

Saturday, February 24, 2024

10:30 to 12:15

Coffee & Snacks at 10:00 a.m.

Seating is limited so come early.

Saturday, April 6: Weather date if either talk is postponed.

Crossing the River: Ferries and Bridges

Joel Fowler (Northfield Historical Society) and Others

Saturday, March 23, 2024 • 10:30 to 12:15

Coffee & Snacks at 10:00 a.m.

Seating is limited so come early.

Save the Date! The Gravestone Girls

Saturday, April 20, 1:00–3:00 p.m.

Second floor of Gill Town Hall followed by a walking tour of Center Cemetery

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Gill Complete Streets Prioritization Plan

Franklin Regional Council of Governments staff has been working with the Town of Gill to develop a Complete Streets Project Prioritization Plan. The goal is to identify projects to improve bicycle and pedestrian access throughout the town. Completion of a Prioritization Plan will make the Town of Gill eligible to apply for funding (up to \$500,000 in 5 years) to implement the projects identified in the plan through the MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program. Examples of eligible projects include creating new or improving existing crosswalks, developing new sidewalks or bicycle paths, installing pedestrian crossing signals, improving bicycle safety/mobility with new bike lanes or wider shoulders, or installing bicycle parking.

FRCOG staff conducted field work in the fall and winter to evaluate existing conditions and identify potential areas for projects. Examples of top priority projects include a sidewalk connection from the Stoughton Place apartments down to The Mill gas/convenience store as well as pedestrian improvements in the village center by Town Hall. Other examples include adding pedestrian crossing to West Gill Road where disc golf players cross the street as well as safety improvements where Northfield Mount Hermon students cross Main Road to access the lower athletic fields. The FRCOG also gathered input about specific areas where improvements are needed through an online survey posted in the previous edition of this newsletter.

For a full list and details of these proposed projects please go to the link below to view an online map.

<https://arcg.is/SiTKK>



Are you 80+ yearsold?

GILL NEIGHBORS can provide:

Rides to medical appointments

Rides to the Montague Senior Center

Medication pick-up at local pharmacies

Rides to visit friends or family at local healthcare facilities

Pick up pre-ordered groceries

Pick up food at Food Pantry

Call Emily at 413.863.9446 and leave a message.

Also, Kim the librarian will bring books to you!

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