

FRIENDS OF SAXONVILLE

NEWSLETTER • FALL 2017

We Miss Jerry

by David Longden

One of Saxonville's best friends and Framingham's best citizens, Gerald Couto, passed away earlier this summer.

"Jerry" was a successful architect and saw the beauty and value of our classic buildings and neighborhoods. First as a Town Meeting member, then as Chair of the Framingham Historic District Commission, member of the Framingham Historic Commission and the Athenaeum Task Force, Jerry worked hard to preserve the architectural treasures around us. He was an early member of Friends of Saxonville and a frequent advisor to our board regarding historic issues. He was a trusted friend.

Jerry was a strong proponent of the Athenaeum Restoration project, one of FOS' primary goals. His unwavering



Gerald Couto, October 9, 1939 – June 5, 2017.
(Courtesy photo)

support and guidance on this project over the years is key to our progress so far, and will be part of our inspiration to continue moving forward. We will work with the new city government to complete this project and put the building back into use as a community hall for all of Framingham's residents to share, as Jerry wanted.

As his health began to fail, Jerry made a final gift to Friends of Saxonville: he asked his friends and relatives that in lieu of flowers, donations should instead be made to our Athenaeum Restoration fund. As a result we have received many significant donations in Jerry's name.

The FOS board would like to thank Jerry, his life partner Jan Harrington, and his family for this generous gesture of support, and for all of Jerry's many, many contributions over the years. ❖

New Mills Signage

by Emily Schlichtman

New changes are coming to the Saxonville Mills! The Framingham Zoning Board has approved new wayfinding and tenant signage around the Mills property. The sign package includes updated mill and dock numbers, exterior tenant directories, two new private ways with street numbers, monumental signs, reserved parking, and general wayfinding signs. Visitors will be greeted by directional signs at all major entrance points to the property and then be guided to their final destination.

These signs give us a chance to reintroduce ourselves in the community while also preserving the history and charm of our historic buildings. Dave Laituri, product designer and owner of OneHundred created the graphics featuring a classic
(Continued on page 2)



Rendering © Herb Everett/Ever DesignWorks.

Discover Saxonville – A Stroll Through Our Village

by Paula Longden

Join us for our annual Discover Saxonville event on Saturday, September 16 (rain date September 17). The event will focus around the center of our village and take place from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Starting at Pinefield Shopping Center, attendees may

enjoy a stroll through the village experiencing local music, food and tours of the Saxonville Mills and businesses, concluding with an activity at the Athenaeum.

You won't want to miss this fun day! For more details, visit our website at www.Saxonville.org. Hope to see you there! ❖

Volunteers hold June River Cleanup in Saxonville

by Steven Weisman

Volunteers organized by Friends of Saxonville spent a fun-filled and productive Saturday morning on June 24, 2017 picking up refuse from the Water Street bank of the Sudbury River in Saxonville's village center. While the original plan had been to keep out of the water, a morning rain soaked all participants!

The event's success was due in large part to help from the Town's Conservation Commission and Department of Public Works. The Sanitation Department supplied heavy-duty bags for the clean up, which scoured the section of shoreline and riverbank from the Saxonville Dam to Wally's on Water Street, below where the Town has put in a new sidewalk along the river. At the



River clean up volunteers in Saxonville. (Courtesy photo)

end of the day, the Town returned and picked up our collections for proper disposal.

Treasures collected in the weeds and shallow water included a golf bag, car parts, lumber, new and old bottles, balls of multiple sizes, soft and hard drink cans, orange hazard cones, and many discarded foam hot drink cups and food wrappers.

Those who missed the fun have another chance to clean up the Sudbury River on Saturday, September 16,

2017 from 9 am to noon at the OARS 31st Annual River Cleanup event. Find information and event details at www.oars3ivers.org/events. Friends of Saxonville will be participating. Join us! ❖

City Districts in Saxonville

by David Longden

After more than 300 years with Town Meeting as the people's voice, a mayor and an 11-member city council will govern Framingham by year's end. Good or bad, some changes will be in order.

For representation by the city council and the school committee, Framingham will be divided into nine representative districts. Saxonville will be represented mainly by two districts: District 1 (former Town precincts 1 & 2) and District 2 (former precincts 3 & 5), with small sections of district 4 as well. Each of these districts will elect one representative to the two boards. In addition, there will be two "at-large" positions on the city council.

However, voting will continue to be done by the same precincts we have been using under the Town government. Reminder: Go to the same place to vote as you always have.

Not all candidates may live in your neighborhood. For example, District 1 stretches across northern Framingham from the Marlborough town line to Wayland, and includes much of Nobscot. A city councilor could live anywhere in that area. District 2 also includes much of Nobscot as well as Saxonville.

Friends of Saxonville cannot and will not endorse any candidates, but we encourage our members and residents of Districts 1, 2 and 4 to participate in the process, and make sure that all candidates are as aware of Saxonville's issues and needs as they are of those of Nobscot and the rest of Framingham.

The Preliminary Election will be held on Tuesday September 26, to narrow down the candidates. The City Election will be held Tuesday November 7. Our new government will take office on January 1. ❖

New Mills Signage

(continued from page 1)

black background with white font. Herb Everett, designer and owner of Ever DesignWorks, developed the signage system and 3D presentation drawings. Most wayfinding signs will feature a distinct Saxonville Mills logo with a font that was recreated from original plans found in the Mills. Herb, his wife Gina, and Dave are tenants at the Mills – we are lucky to have them as resources in our home.

We will install over 200 new signs, and are currently planning the next stage of Mills updates. New "collage portals" at major entrances will improve tenant presence. They will display tenant logos and alert visitors that they are headed in the right direction to get to a certain business. The portals will

feature black backgrounds, but will have color for each tenant to stay true to their brand.

This is a big project, but we have the support of our maintenance crew, Herb, our tenants, and the community. Saxonville Realty would like to thank the Town of Framingham for support during this process and the Economic Development Board for their dedication to help fund this project. This change will benefit everyone at the Mills and a visitor's experience. To see the plans or what else we are up to at the Mills, visit us online at www.creativedevco.com.

Emily is the Assistant Property Manager at Creative Development Company. ❖

The Saxonville Font by David Laituri

In the center of the Saxonville Mills complex courtyard is building 1G, a small one-story building that once housed the workshop for fabricating and repairing mill machinery. Found amongst forgotten piles of old drawings for gears and machine parts in its basement was a crumbling blueprint for the mill site, complete with a beautiful, hand-lettered title block by a draftsman named 'Gale.' Mr.(?) Gale was by no means a calligrapher, nor was this a wedding invitation-grade piece. It was a utilitarian document meant to be referenced by all in the region - it only needed to be accurate and legible.

Given the Mill's rich history and significance to the area, it was only natural to use this fantastic piece of mill history as a foundation for the new Saxonville Mills logo - to tie the Mill's past to its constantly evolving future. It's rare to find a meaningful piece of early history like this in such usable condition - especially in a 150+-year-old building that has had hundreds of occupants. We got lucky and it was a wonderful place to start.

Once the completed logo text was beginning to show up in the soon-to-be-implemented signage and way-finding system, a complete set of letters, numbers and basic punctuation was soon needed for various other applications around the Mills ... a challenging task since the title block had so few letters to begin with - and no numbers!



Saxonville Mills font - before/after.

Mr. Gale's original title block was hand-drafted most likely with a quill & ink. He appears to have been right-handed and there is a lot of unique 'human' character in his letterforms - blobs of ink, a small quiver in his straight lines as well as quirks left behind as he lifted his pen off the paper. Even with modern graphic software, it was a challenge to maintain this human character while building the missing letters and num-



The original 1912 blueprint title block.

bers. We had to resist the temptation to straighten out the line work and generally 'clean it up.' The goal was to keep as much of the original hand-drawn quality while making it a complete and usable digital font that works as a single word or short sentence, small or large, and is readable from a distance.

Logos from several well-known brands like Coca-Cola and Ford began as a simple, hand-drawn scripts on paper from their earliest days, carefully maintained and carried forward by many generations of stewards. We hope this resurrection of Mr. Gale's original font helps tie the Mill's past to its future for many generations to come! Thanks, Mr. Gale. ❖

David Laituri is the founder of Onehundred (Onehundred.co) - a local product creation company 'born' in the Saxonville Mills in 2013. He's also the graphic design component of the team tasked with developing the complete new signage system for the Mills.



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Water Chestnuts

by Ron Chick, ROS River Stewards Chair

The Ponded section of the Sudbury River in Saxonville has been treated twice this summer with Clearcast herbicide. It appears as though 70% of the extremely invasive water chestnuts have been affected and are browning and dying. There will be a third spraying in the next week or two. We have been able to use this wonderful resource summer for the first time in many years. Many thanks to the Framingham Conservation Commission for their initiative. ❖



Sudbury River photographed in July 2017, showing fewer Eurasian water chestnuts due to herbicide application. © Ron Chick

Athenaeum's Courtyard – Looking Good!

by David Longden

The front lawn of the Athenaeum looks very colorful this summer, thanks to the Town of Framingham and Bose Corporation.

This spring, as an early part of the Athenaeum's restoration, the Town began updated the landscaping in front of the building. The old scraggly hedges were removed, and new white picket fencing was installed. As a public service, Bose employees installed flowering plants by the fences in gardens designated by the town. Finally, the Town's Buildings department removed the old sod and seeded new grass. Helped by the generous rain we received this spring, the Athenaeum's curb appeal is better than anyone can recall in recent times. ❖



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