



Town of Somerset

Town of Somerset

Volume 23, Issue 3

From Your Town Clerk

Dear Residents,

As we embark on one of the most wonderful times of the year, we are in some of the most trying economic times ever. We can be thankful that we live in such a wonderful and caring community. With the benefits being held for our ill and those left homeless by fire to the food pantry, we are continually asked to dig deep into our pockets to help our community. We never know when a tragedy may strike. It is a blessing to know that we all care and have many things to be thankful for.

I have many projects that I am working on including FREE Electronic Recycling, Credit Card Acceptance, Veterans Project and most importantly a Smoke Detector Giveaway Program for the safety of our residents. Please read further in the newsletter for the information.

As always, I am available for questions at 795-3575.

Becky Connolly, Town Clerk



Your Town Officials At a Glance

Supervisor Richard Meyers	795-3352
Councilman Dudley Chaffee	765-9826
Councilwoman April Gow	795-9280
Councilman Randy Wayner	795-9316
Councilman Dan Engert	795-3596
Town Clerk Rebecca Connolly	795-3575
Hours: Monday—Friday	9:00AM—4:30PM
Highway Superintendent -Ken Bigelow	795-3866
Water/Sewer/Grounds Superintendent	795-9919
Mel Denny	

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NEWS FROM THE HIGHWAY DEPT.

Just a few friendly reminders from the Highway Dept:

Leaving snow on the highway is prohibited by Section 1219 of the Vehicle and Traffic Law and Section 214 of Highway Law of the State of New York.

Parking on any Town Road is prohibited in accordance with provisions of Town of Somerset Code 191-15 as specified in Schedule XI (191-33) 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. from November 1 to April 1.

The New York State Bridge Management Engineer has downgraded the Lower Lake Rd. Bridge over Fish Creek from a Yellow structural flag to a Red Structural flag. It is being addressed by the Town engineer and myself to ensure the safety of the traveling public and also to keep the bridge open until the replacement can be built.

The Engineer is making every effort to accelerate the design schedule to advance the construction start date of the project to the 2009 construction season. Survey work has already begun; borings will be completed soon; and the project is moving forward as fast as can be expected. I will make every effort to keep you informed as we move forward with

this project.

I would like to thank everyone for your cooperation this past construction season. Several paving and drainage jobs have been completed this year. I apologize for any inconvenience they may have caused.

The Employees of the Highway Dept. wish everyone a Safe and Happy Holiday Season.

Drive Carefully,
Kenneth J. Bigelow
Superintendent of Highways
795-3866



Water/Sewer Department News

By Melvin Denny, Water/Sewer/Grounds Superintendent
795-9919



BEFORE YOU DIG - Please remember to call for underground utility location before you do any digging. The toll free number is **1-800-962-7962, or 811**. It is the law that you must call and request **at least 2 full working days in advance** so that underground utilities have a chance to mark out their respective lines.

DOUBLE CHECK BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICES - These devices are required on all new construction and when there is a change of property owner. Final readings for property sold will include inspection for the double check valve. All irrigation meters must have backflow prevention devices.

WATER SUPPLY SECURITY - In an effort to protect our water supply from vandalism the Water Department is asking everyone to be vigilant and report any suspicious activity around fire hydrants or anything that may involve the water system. Please call me during the workweek at 795-9919 or at home at 795-9303. If I am not available, please call the Sheriff's Dept. - 911.

FIRE HYDRANTS - For your safety and that of your neighbors, please keep the fire hydrant by your house clear of trees, shrubs and snow. This is crucial in case of a fire and for the maintenance of the hydrant. New York State law requires a minimum of 3 feet of clearance.

TOWN EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION - If anyone comes to your door saying he is from this department and needs access to your house regarding your water or sewer, he will be driving a marked Town of Somerset truck and will have Town employee identification. If this is not the case, do not let them in and call this Department immediately at 795-9919.

NEW RADIO READ METERS - Over the next few years, the Water Department will be replacing your existing water meter with a radio read meter. These meters will record your reading into a computer as the employee drives by your house with a special device. As we purchase new meters, the Water Department will be calling to replace your meter.

HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEAP)

HEAP is a federally funded program designed to assist eligible households in meeting their home energy needs. The program is administered by the Department of Social Services. Eligibility is based on household income and your housing situation. An eligible housing situation means that you must either pay directly for heating costs or must pay rent that includes heating costs. Individual applicants must be US citizens or qualified aliens. Applications are available at the local Department of Social Services offices, Niagara County Office for the Aging, or electronically download a printable version of the application from the internet at <https://www.otda.state.ny.us/otdaheap/>

Niagara County Department of Social Services
HEAP Dept.

20 East Avenue

P.O. Box 506

Lockport, NY 14095-0506

Monday—Friday 8:00AM—3:45PM

439-7744

You can also stop by the Town Hall to pick up an application or obtain more details.



Reducing Junk Mail

HOW DO I GET OFF THE MAILING LIST FOR CATALOGS?

There are a variety of strategies you can use to get off direct marketing lists:

1. Mailing lists of the major national marketers

If you want to be taken off as many *national* mailing lists as possible, your first step is to contact the Direct Marketing Association's (DMA) Mail Preference Service (MPS). You must re-register after three years.

Register for the Mail Preference Service by mail. Send a letter plus a \$1 check or money order to:

Mail Preference Service

Direct Marketing Association

PO Box 643

Carmel, NY 10512

For our simple mail-in form, visit: www.privacyrights.org/Letters/jml1a.htm.

When you register, your name and address are placed in a "do not mail" file which is updated monthly. DMA members are required to update their lists at least quarterly, and some do it monthly. Businesses who are not members of the DMA may also take advantage of this "do not mail" list, so registering with the DMA will reduce much of your junk mail.

- **Register online.** You may also sign up online at the DMA's website. There is no fee for online registration. Visit: <https://www.dmachoice.org/dma/member/regist.action> DMA says this option is quicker than by postal mail.

Register names of deceased: The Direct Marketing Association also gives you the ability to register the names of deceased loved ones with their **Deceased Do Not Contact** list (DDNC) at:

<https://preference.the-dma.org/cgi/ddnc.php>. Click on the Continue button at the bottom of the page to get to the form.



BARKER FIRE DEPT.

By CHIEF RANDY HILDEBRANT

As the cold weather approaches and our economy continues to falter, more and more people are looking for alternate ways to heat their homes that will be less costly and more efficient. Space heaters, either electric, gas or kerosene, have become the norm in many households over the recent years. However, so have house fires and chimney fires. The fire service throughout Niagara County, has seen a dramatic increase in house fires with the cause being directed at the use of alternate heating devices. Carelessness and faulty equipment have been the primary reasons these appliances have failed. If you are going to use these appliances in your home, you need to follow some basic safety tips.

- **NEVER** use any type of heating device that is fueled with propane inside a residence.
- **ALWAYS** keep all heating devices away from combustible materials.
- **ALWAYS** use your device as per the manufacturers operating instructions.

For those residents that use wood burning stoves or fireplaces, have your chimney inspected and cleaned **BEFORE** you operate it this season and make periodic checks during the winter months as it's being used. Chimney fires can happen anytime without warning and can be devastating to your home. Check all your smoke alarms and be sure they have fresh batteries.

As we all grieve over the devastating fire and loss of life that occurred in the Town of Hartland, we need to be better prepared and more aware of our fire prevention efforts. Be sure all the residents in your home, particularly the elderly and children, know all the escape routes out of your home and a meeting place to gather once outside. Run fire drills in your home and **practice it!!** Be sure everyone knows how to operate a fire extinguisher. Be sure children know the dangers of matches and candles. Candles have been the leading cause of fire fatalities, and the numbers continue to rise. Carelessness is the leading factor in these fires. Avoid using candles all together. They are pretty and smell good, but they also kill and destroy lives.

Myself, as well as all the members of the Barker Fire Dept., are here to assist you in education and fire prevention awareness. If you would like us to help you plan escape routes, educate your children in fire safety, check your smoke detectors, or show you the proper way to use a fire extinguisher, feel free to contact me at 716-471-6080. I or a firefighter will be happy to come to your home and assist you.

The members of the Barker Fire Dept would like to wish you all a Safe and Happy Holiday season.

A reminder that you can order reflective address markers for only \$12. These markers help make your address visible day or night, and help emergency responders find your house. Order forms are available at the Town Hall. This service is provided by the Junior Firefighters.



ELECTRONIC RECYCLING Coming to Town

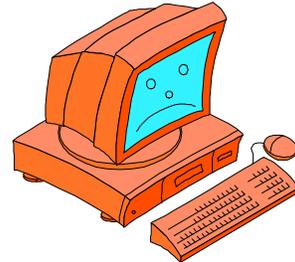
I am excited to report that the Town of Somerset, in conjunction with the Barker Central School Junior Class and the Niagara County Refuse District, will be offering FREE electronic recycling in the very near future. The following items are considered E-Waste and will be accepted:

Computers; Monitors; Laptops; Printers; VCR/DVD Players/ Stereos; Fax Machines/Photocopiers; Audio/Video Equipment; All Electrical Wire; Telephones; Wireless Devices; Power Supply Units; Computer

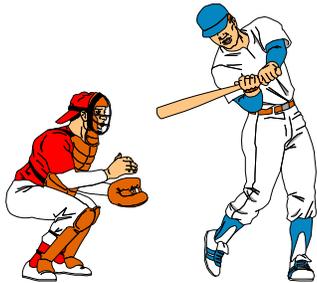
Chips, Cases, Hard Drives; Keyboards, Mice, Speakers— NO TV's

Save your items for our collection...

DETAILS coming soon.



It's time to start thinking about baseball and softball for the Spring. Somerset Youth Baseball will be having signups at the School Book Fair February 3rd, 4th, and 5th, and at the AFS Carnival on March 1st. Sign up early!



UNCLAIMED FUNDS

There are numerous residents or former residents of the Town of Somerset and the Village of Barker listed on the Office of the State Comptroller's website with unclaimed funds. You can access the website at www.osc.state.ny.us to see if you are on the list. If you do not have a computer, call the office and we will be happy to assist you to see if you are on the list and get you the proper form to make your claim.



HISTORIAN'S CORNER

By: Lorraine Wayner 795-3575

In this news letter I thought I would tell you about a once-thriving business in the Village of Barker. It was George W. Haxton & Son. And to make it more interesting, their building that was so busy years ago is still busy.

In 1887, William Atwater operated a grain elevator on the east side of Quaker Rd. south of the railroad tracks. The grain elevator was a busy place for buying and selling wheat.

There was a large brick building in back of the Atwater Grain Elevator that was used for many years, and the home of several businesses.

Leslie A. Huntington and Charles Huntington operated a feed business here. They took in wheat and sold fertilizer. A small office was attached to the front.

Millard Allen owned a petroleum company and used the building for his operation. Louis G. Bridgeman worked for him and later bought the business.

A business that utilized the brick building was George W. Haxton & Company. At one time they were one of Barker's largest industries. They are remembered for their cherry business. They purchased sweet cherries to entice growers to sell them their sour cherry crop.

There was a gray wooden building in back of the brick building. Sweet cherries were processed in this building while the brick structure was used for processing sour cherries.

Sweet cherries were brought in by local growers and stored in whiskey barrels. Some 'with stems' and some 'without'. The barrels were filled with cherries and sulfur dioxide was added to bleach them. The fumes could make you sick. Day after day men worked in these conditions, as did high school students that wanted a summer job. After a period of time, the bleached sweet cherries were pitted, put back in barrels and sent to Oakfield for distribution.

After the sour cherries were washed and sorted, bulk barrels were sold to other finishers. Many barrels were sent directly to Haxtons' main headquarters in Oakfield.

In the 1940's, Haxton Foods was the receiving station for several fruits and vegetables. However, the main operation of the plant was receiving and brining cherries.

After Haxton Co. discontinued operations, the Pro-Fac Corporation purchased the plant. Curtice-Burns Corp. leased and operated the plant until it closed in 1963. When Cook Produce, the last business that used the packing house, ceased operations in 1967, an industry died.

In 1984, the gray wooden building was torn down. In 1986, a Barker resident, Jack Taylor, and his daughter, Tracey, purchased the brick building. After a year of very hard work they transformed a deserted warehouse into a really attractive setting. They opened a dance and teen center. It was named Phase IV". In 1988, they moved their Pizza Shop and Ice Cream parlor from Church Street to this location.

In 1991, Mark and Judy Remington and Jimmy and Jackie Galeas purchased the business. They named it Pizza, Wings and Things (PWT). And so it is today --- a building that was busy years ago is still busy!

CODE ENFORCEMENT

By Randy Hildebrant

Wintertime is here and I would like to remind everyone to have your chimneys inspected and cleaned BEFORE you use them.

I've also been receiving many complaints from residents in regards to poorly kept properties throughout the Town and many property maintenance violations. I have cited many property owners and will be vigilant for other offenders. The Town of Somerset is a proud town to live in. Let's please keep our properties neat and make our Town a pleasant place to visit and live in.

Also as a reminder, anyone who chooses to install a wood-burning stove, corn stove or any other alternate heating device must first obtain a building permit and have an inspection done of the appliance and ventilation system. Failure to do so places you in violation and could result in problems with your homeowners insurance. All stoves and fireplaces must have a Certificate of Compliance issued from this office.

Recently, the Town of Somerset passed a resolution effective July 8th, 2008 regulating the installation and operation of Outdoor Wood Heating Devices. If you wish to install an OHD (Outdoor Heating Device) you must first obtain a building permit. Please call my office first and I will advise you of the set back requirements, stack heights and other requirements and restrictions. Please note: Outdoor Wood Appliances installed after July 8th, 2008 are prohibited in all R1 and R2 zones. If you are not sure what zone you are in, feel free to contact my office and I will assist you.

Everything that I have spoken about can be found on the New York State Dept. of State website by going to www.dos.state.ny.us. Once there, you can follow the link to Code Enforcement and Administration. Also, you can find all of our local codes and ordinances at www.somerstny.org. But as always, you can call my office at anytime at 795-9556.

HAVE A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE HOLIDAY SEASON!!!!

HONORING THE VETERANS

It was my pleasure, along with the Veterans Project Committee, to unveil the new page on our website (www.somerstny.org) honoring our Veterans at the Veterans Dinner on November 9th. Data and pictures have been taken, with numerous applications being received to place on the site. If you know of some Veteran that is not already listed or if the information needs to be updated, please contact me and I will be happy to assist you in getting the correct information and picture onto the website.



PAPER RECYCLING

Thank you for continuing to fill the green and yellow recycling containers at the Town Hall. The school is conducting a contest for the class that brings in the most catalogs....we certainly get too many this time of year. Accepted Items: Newspapers, catalogs, magazines, junk mail, shredded paper in clear plastic bags, office paper and school paper, paperback books, and hardcover books with the covers removed. NO WRAPPING PAPER OR BOXES PLEASE!

SMOKE DETECTOR GIVEAWAY PROGRAM

In light of the recent tragedies due to house fires, I have embarked upon a smoke detector giveaway program that will be conducted in conjunction with the Barker Fire Department. I am currently obtaining information and prices to present to the Town Board for consideration. No home should be without a working smoke detector and it is my goal to make every residence in Somerset/Barker a safe haven.

Watch for further details.....



CREDIT CARDS

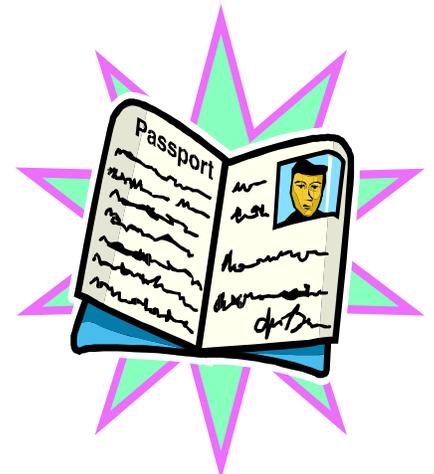
I am pleased to announce that beginning January 1st, for your convenience, we will be accepting MasterCard and Visa credit cards for transactions. You will have the opportunity to pay any transaction conducted by the Town Clerk's Office or pay your taxes via credit card.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

December 9th 7:30PM	Town Board Meeting
December 10th 7:30PM	Planning Board Meeting
December 14th 1:00PM—4:00PM	Victorian Christmas at the Babcock House Museum Beehive Oven Baking, Organ music, Refreshments FREE
Week of December 15th	Centennial Quilt on display at the Barker Free Library
December 16th 1:00PM—6:00PM	Blood Drive at Faith United Methodist Church

PASSPORTS

The Town Clerk is a passport agent and accepts and processes your passport information. We also take the photos for \$9.00. For identity purposes, a passport will be an accepted form to cross the border into Canada. If you are intending to fly or take a cruise, you must have a passport. You can expect to receive your passport within 3 to 4 weeks of application, so plan ahead and give yourself plenty of time to get your documentation. Call the office if you need information or an application with instructions.



News from Councilman Wayner

During the Town Board’s recent budget work sessions and the subsequent Budget Public Hearing there was much constructive and informative dialog surrounding the Town’s various unappropriated / unreserved fund balances. The ability of our taxpayers to easily locate information on these balances within the budget document was also a concern. Therefore I would like to share the following with you.

In our deliberations to work through the budget process, I phoned, the NYS Association of Towns and our Town’s legal counsel to learn more about the purposes for which unappropriated dollars could

be used. I was told that “unappropriated funds must be spent within the same department or purpose for which they were originally levied”. In other words, it would be illegal to spend highway, refuse, water, or sewer unappropriated funds for anything other than specified highway, refuse, water, or sewer expenses.

Accordingly, while the total of all of the Town’s unappropriated/unreserved balances for the 2009 budget year is \$2,031,147, only the General A Fund can be used for unplanned General Fund related purposes. The total of the General A Fund balances for the 2009 budget

year is \$984,245. and constitute the Town’s only available reserve to cover unforeseen general expenses. Of course the hope is that we will not have to tap into these reserves which comprise a critical component of a fiscally responsible budget.

Regarding access to this information, Town Clerk Becky Connolly has posted the entire budget including the spreadsheet showing the unappropriated fund balances (re: pg.30) on the Town’s website:

www.somersetny.org

The Town Hall has a container to collect Box Tops for Barker Central PTSA. Every Box Top that gets turned in is worth 10 cents for our school. Look for them on brands such as Ziploc Bags, Kleenex, General Mills cereals, and Pillsbury biscuits. The next time you come in to the Town Hall, bring your Box Tops with you and put them in our container.

Visit www.boxtops4education.com to view the complete list of products, or pick up a copy at the Town Hall.



THE BARKER FOOD PANTRY NEEDS YOUR HELP

The Barker Food Pantry is located at the Faith United Methodist Church on the corner of Quaker Road & Haight Roads. This food pantry provides assistance for approximately 75 pre-qualified families in our area. During the Christmas season,

resources are spread thin and needs are greater than ever. You can help by dropping off canned goods, boxed foods, pasta, powdered milk, boxed mac & cheese, basic baking ingredients (flour, sugar, shortening, etc.), local food store gift cards, or checks made payable to “Barker Food Pantry”. The pantry is open Monday 8:30 to Noon and Tuesday 1:00 to 3:00. Please feel free to contact the

following persons for more information and other ways that you can help:

Dina Potter 795-9952

Steve Haight 795-9177

Faith United Methodist Church
795-9945

Thank you to all of the food pantry volunteers and contributors.

May God Richly Bless.

Town of Somerset

8700 Haight Road
P.O. Box 368
Barker, NY 14012-0368

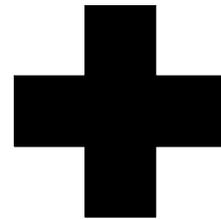
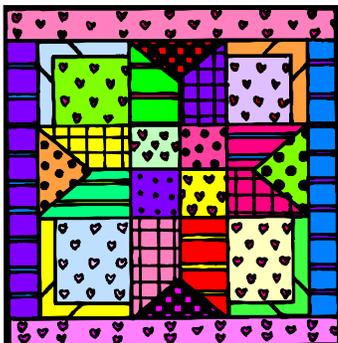
Phone: 716-795-3575
Fax: 716-795-9041
Website: www.somersetny.org

U.S. Postage
PAID
Barker, NY 14012
Permit #21



*A final **Free Rabies Immunization** clinic for 2008 will be held on Saturday, December 6 from 2:00—4:00pm at the City of North Tonawanda—Public Works Department, 758 Erie Avenue, North Tonawanda 695-8585*

Stop by the Barker Free Library during the week of December 15, 2008 to see the Bicentennial Quilt! It will be on display the entire week.



RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE
FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
(ALL DRIVES ARE FROM 1:00—6:00pm)
DECEMBER 16, 2008
FEBRUARY 10, 2009
APRIL 7, 2009
JUNE 2, 2009
JULY 28, 2009
SEPTEMBER 22, 2009
NOVEMBER 17, 2009