

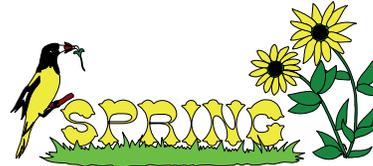


Town of Somerset

Volume 28, Issue 1

Spring 2013

From Your Town Clerk



Dear Residents,

Finally Spring is upon us. We have had a long winter but we are revived with the sprouting of flowers, buds and the arrival of birds. As we refresh our lives, there are many things happening in our town.

Thank you for your continued support of our local organizations, fundraisers and community happenings. We have a wonderful caring community and one of the greatest places to live. Enjoy the Spring weather.....

Becky Connolly, Town Clerk and Editor



GOING TO THE DOGS.....

There is an increasing number of reports of stray dogs in the Town and Village. New York State requires dogs to be licensed at the age of 4 months. Proof of rabies is required at the time of licensing. The fee for spayed/neutered dogs is \$6.00 and for unspayed/unneutered is \$16.00. If you have not licensed your dog and the dog needs a rabies shot, see the information for the free rabies clinic on page 6.

An enumeration will be conducted shortly and for any dog found to be unlicensed, there will be an additional \$10.00 fee. PLEASE take the time to license your dog to avoid the additional fee. Once a dog is licensed, if it becomes loose, we can reunite you expeditiously and avoid a trip (and expense) to the Dog Pound.

Office hours are 9 a.m.—4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Town Clerk’s office at 795-3575.

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A Word From Your Supervisor

Daniel M. Engert - 795-3575 daniel.engert@gmail.com

Greetings friends and neighbors in Somerset! We certainly aren't experiencing the warmth that we so enjoyed last year and I know our baseball, softball and track teams can certainly attest to this! In addition to the much different weather, last year the Town was involved in negotiations over a PILOT agreement with the USNYPP Somerset Operating Facility and the plant was eerily idle at this juncture; we were also in the early stages of significant revisions to our Comprehensive Plan and zoning codes; and the Board was developing the strategy for an effective marketing campaign to attract appropriate economic development opportunities within the Town. Finally, we had a Town budget that needed to be brought in line to adjust for the current economic conditions. For 2013, I submitted a budget which reduced Town spending by more than 20% and the Town Board made some further cuts which lowered spending, your tax rate and the tax levy to the lowest levels in more than ten years while actually improving basic services to the Somerset taxpayer. Please know that I, along with your Town Board will continue to press the expenditure lines and appropriately fund for the essential services that you expect and deserve. We fully understand and appreciate your mandate to keep your taxes at the lowest level possible while delivering the essential services at the highest level possible.

Let's fast forward to this year. We have a PILOT agreement in place, the UPNYPP Somerset Facility is operating, our Comprehensive Plan has been revised, we have scheduled the necessary public hearings to adopt the zoning code revisions and our marketing strategy has taken shape. Our challenges remain before us but we are executing the mission plan! With respect to our marketing strategy, the County's **Economic Development Commissioner, Sam Ferraro** and our own **14th District Legislator, John Syracuse** have both been extremely critical allies as I strive to promote our Town within the economic development realm. We recently completed a detailed marketing brochure which will be circulated throughout the northeastern United States and Southern Canadian business community as well as on the web. We continue to complete the necessary steps to pursue the Shovel Ready Certification for the parcel of property to the west of the Somerset Operating facility. This certification will place it in a very unique and advantageous market for business development site selectors. We will remain vigilant to market our Town for development!

However, I must bring attention to an issue that is of great importance to Somerset as well as to western New York generally. As you are fully aware, our power plant, its employees along with its indirect jobs, has and continues to generate a significant economic impact within our community. A proposed energy project that I will discuss below threatens the Somerset and western New York plants future and we all need to stand together to oppose this ill conceived plan called the Champlain Hudson Power Express!

As I have shared with you before, one of the challenges the plants face is the inability to get their power to where the downstate demand is located. There was a time, and I'm sure many can recall, when western New York had a sizeable manufacturing sector, a booming auto industry and a resulting heavy demand for the local power. The western region power plants, including Somerset, could rely on this local demand to sell their power at a profitable margin. Times have changed along with the economy and we have realized a decline in the manufacturing and auto industry sector, particularly in the western and upstate region of New York State. At this present time, our plants are struggling to get their "product" (clean reliable power) to the only surging market in the state. Clearly, the regulatory controls resulting from an environmentally charged agenda are impacting the plants but the lack of transmission upgrades over the years has resulted in a "bottleneck" in the transmission system around Albany. This is also a huge issue for them as well, let me explain. Most power travels from Western New York eastward to Albany and then south down the Hudson Valley into New York City. Often, around Albany, there's just too much power trying to get to New York City. That means higher prices in the city and a reduced market for upstate producers. This reduced market has put our plants on the teetering edge of closure which has resulted in strains on our local economy over the past several years. A mixture of expanded transmission and new power sources is what is needed and the Governor laid out an "Energy Highway Blueprint" which calls for more than \$5.7 billion dollars of investment over the next 10 years to increase power transmission and promote new generation.

The Champlain Hudson Power Express is an initiative which has been promoted by some deep pocketed investors in Albany that will cripple western New York power plants, eliminate western New York jobs and hurt western New York communities, including and specifically Somerset. The CHPE project is essentially a 1000 mw extension cord (which creates no new jobs) being proposed to run from Quebec to New York City. If implemented, by bypassing Somerset and the WNY generators, it would quite simply draw from the resources and unlimited subsidized power from Canada, directly benefitting them along with some deep pocket investors **entirely at the expense of New Yorkers**. It would result in the closure of viable plants here, a significant loss of jobs and would release devastating economic impacts upon our communities. **Senator George Maziarz** has been a fierce champion to oppose this project and I provided testimony to the Senate Energy Committee, which he chairs to join him in opposition. I applaud **Senator Maziarz** and **Assemblywoman Jane Corwin** for their efforts thus far to stave off this very poorly conceived initiative at the state level.

Continued on page 4



Councilwoman Robin Jansen

716-795-3575

How to Dispose of Compact Florescent Light Bulbs (CFL's)

Though there are many advantages of using compact florescent light bulbs, like reduction in energy consumption, lesser power bills and longer life of bulbs, still we encounter many health hazards and risks from the use of CFL bulbs and lights.

Compact florescent light bulbs contain mercury which is poisonous. This poses a very big threat to our environment when dumped in landfills along with other garbage after becoming obsolete. Home Depot has become the largest U.S. retailer to launch a CFL recycling program. Our local Home Depot in Lockport has a recycle drop box for CFL's at the front of their store. They request that you place your obsolete CFL's in a zip type plastic bag and place in their recycle bin.

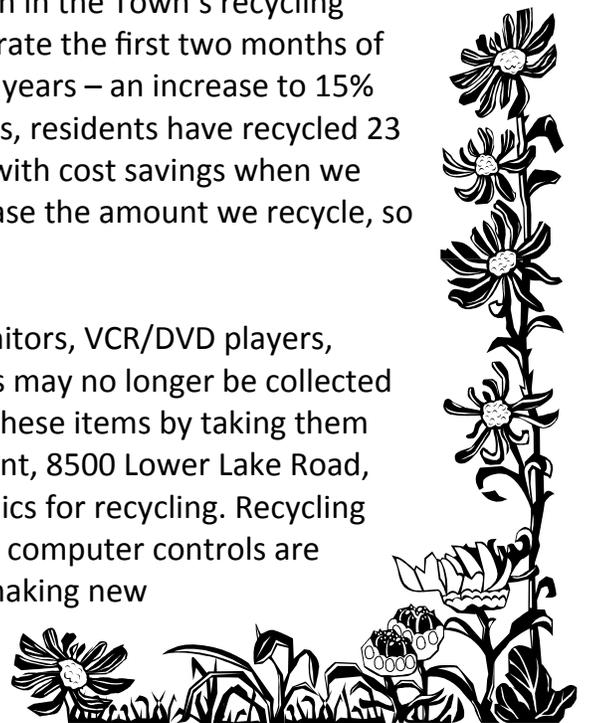
Modern Disposal Services has stated that residential CFL bulbs are not regulated so if you can't take your CFL's to Home Depot, place the bulbs in a zip type plastic bag and place in your regular garbage – Please do not place in your recycle bin and never place in an incinerator.

If a CFL light bulb breaks – Sweep, don't vacuum. Be careful not to cut yourself. Use rubber gloves to collect all broken material on stiff paper or cardboard and place in a sealed plastic bag. Let the room air out for 15 minutes to remove any lingering mercury vapors.

Here is a word from Modern Disposal Services:

Thank you Somerset residents for your strong participation in the Town's recycling program. There has been a clear increase in the recycling rate the first two months of this year compared to the same months the previous two years – an increase to 15% from an average of 10%. Since the implementation of carts, residents have recycled 23 tons of discards and disposed of 124 tons. We all benefit with cost savings when we reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill and increase the amount we recycle, so keep up the good work recycling!

Just a reminder - Electronic items like TV's, computer monitors, VCR/DVD players, video game consoles and other covered electronic devices may no longer be collected with standard recycling or trash. You should now recycle these items by taking them to our municipal drop-off location at the Water/Sewer Plant, 8500 Lower Lake Road, Barker. Many electronics retail stores also accept electronics for recycling. Recycling electronics is important because heavy metals used in the computer controls are toxic to the environment and are valuable resources for making new electronics.



I Love My Parks Day

Saturday, May 4th, 2013

Golden Hill State Park & Friends of Thirty Mile Point Lighthouse

10am—2pm



Please come and join the Friends of Thirty Mile Point Lighthouse in celebrating I Love my Parks Day. Our park will be hosting a multi-event day beginning at 10am with a dedication of “Beverly’s Room” - a special room in the lighthouse that the Friends have been giving some tender loving care during this past winter. We will also be working on our spring trail clean up, and creating a new area near the playground for the parents to sit and comfortably supervise their children. For more information, please call the Golden Hill State Park office at (716)795-3885 or register online at <http://ptny.org/ilovemypark/register.shtml>

Beverly Rutland was one of the many children who lived in 30 Mile Point Lighthouse. She was raised by her grandparents, Lighthouse Keeper Glenn Seeley and his wife Cora. Even after growing up, being married and raising a family of her own, Beverly was still very much drawn to this lighthouse. Often on Sunday afternoons, her loving husband would drive Beverly into the park and past her beloved lighthouse. So, thanks to a generous donation from Beverly’s children (Ann, Richie and Julie), her love for the lighthouse continues on. Welcome to “Beverly’s Room.”

It began with a fresh coat of paint to the ceiling and a daintier color choice for the walls. The hardwood floors were sanded and 4 coats of polyurethane applied to catch your eye. Local antique stores have yielded some treasures such as a wicker baby crib and bedside table. Recently, there have been items donated from “Friends” that will match beautifully with the bedroom’s décor. Old fashioned shadow boxes will display family photographs and memorabilia. The finishing decorative touches are being added in hopes that everyone enjoys a glimpse into the life of a child living in 30 Mile Point Lighthouse.

Please join us at the 30 Mile Point Lighthouse on May 4, 2013 at 10am. We will celebrate Beverly’s memory and the continuing stewardship of our beautiful historic lighthouse. The dedication will take place at the beginning of our annual I Love My Parks Day.

Hope to see everyone there. --- Renee Campbell, Friend of 30 Mile Point

A Word From Your Supervisor Daniel Engert (cont.)Continued from page 2

On May 2, **Congressman Chris Collins** is joining us to take the lead on this issue and we have organized a rally at the Somerset facility to stand up for the employees of the Somerset plant as well as those of the western fleet of power generators and all those impacted in our western New York communities. We intend to call for the Governor to maintain his commitment to transmission upgrades through the “Energy Highway Blueprint” which frankly, makes the CHPE project absolutely unnecessary and to deliver a strong message of opposition to the CHPE project, **which undermines upstate plants, upstate workers and upstate communities, like Somerset!** Please join with me to call, send letters or emails to the Governor’s Office and send the message that the focus should be on solutions that benefit New York State and to **keep our energy generation “home grown”!**

I will continue to provide updates on this and other matters that are of importance to the Town. Please feel free to stop in to see me at the Town Hall, call or email with any further questions or with suggestions for how I or the Town Board can serve you more effectively. We are your friends and neighbors, elected by you to work for you. We fully appreciate the enormous responsibility that you have placed upon us to get the job done for you. Take care and please support our local farmer’s market, roadside stands and local businesses within our community this year! God Bless!

Highway Department News
Ken Bigelow, Superintendent
716-795-3866



If you are planning to have your driveway paved in the future make sure your contractor has the finish grade of your driveway the same as or lower than the road. The wing plows on our trucks will damage the driveways if they are higher than the road. Also, if you intend to have a concrete driveway installed it is necessary to end the concrete at the road right of way which in most cases is 33 feet from the centerline of the road.

Town highway projects are in the planning stages at this time. The cost of highway construction materials seem to always be on the increase and will probably significantly affect the amount of work that can be completed with the dollars budgeted. As always your patience and cooperation during construction season is greatly appreciated.

Have a safe summer!

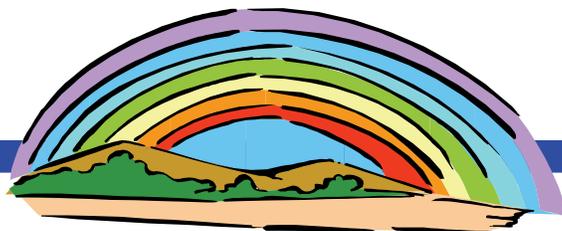
By the time this is published, you will be able to pay your water/sewer bills online. Please check our website www.somersetny.org

Toddler Story Hours Bring Spring into Focus

It's time for spring things at the Barker Free Library's Story Toddler Hours and they will include not only stories with springtime themes, but some fun outdoor activities. Plans for the spring season, which are related to the book selections chosen for each session, include kite flying (weather permitting), some seed planting and gardening activities.

Toddlers are invited to attend the Barker Free Library Toddler Story Hours that are held Mondays from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Barker Free Library, 8706 Main Street in Barker. The dates for upcoming sessions are April 8, 22 and 29. Please call for May dates.

To sign up just stop by the Barker Free Library circulation desk or call 795-3344.





BARKER FIRE DEPT.

By Chief Carlton D. Greene III

Vol nteer Firefighter: *A Vol nteer Firefighter is defined by courage, honor, respect, strength, endurance, brotherhood, commitment, and putting family life aside to help others in need. They gain personal satisfaction in knowing they make a difference in the lives of the people who live and work in their community. What's missing in the word volunteer above? U!*

We will be hosting an open house on April 27th from 12pm-3pm as part of RecruitNY, which is an annual recruitment-based open house event that coincides with National Volunteer Week and unites departments from every corner of the state with the sole mission of bringing in new recruits. Stop in and see what we're all about. You provide us with some time and dedication, and we will provide you with free training, new friendships, and new opportunities. The Fireman's Association of the State of New York (FASNY) also provides a tuition assistance program (up to \$2,500) as well for those attending a local community college. We will have static displays of our equipment, loose equipment displays, a "Jaws of Life" demonstration, as well as other displays and activities. Free hot dogs and refreshments will be provided. So come down and let us show you what we do and maybe we can make **you** a part of **our** team.

It's that time of year for spring clean-up...and along with that comes fires from all sorts of vegetation. The NYS DEC and the Niagara County Dept. of Health have very strict laws and guidelines pertaining to open burns. Basically, an open burn in Niagara County is illegal. A small controllable fire coupled with high winds, dry vegetation and exposure to nearby structures can become very large and uncontrollable in a matter of seconds. Composting or bagging up your yard debris for weekly pick-up is a safer way of disposal. For more information, visit: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/>

On April 5th at noon at the Barker Fire Department, Niagara Hospice will be giving a presentation to the Senior Citizens on the services they provide, anyone can attend. Hospice is also looking for volunteers, call 280-0748 for details. For more information, visit: <http://www.niagarahospice.org/>

We will be holding our annual Spring Raffle on Sunday April 21st from 1pm until 4pm. Doors will open at noon. Tickets are \$20/ea. and available from any firefighter. You can also call Dick Wayner at 795-3173 or Jeff Dewart at 795-9268. There will be side raffles, 50/50 splits and many more prizes. Ticket also includes all you can eat spaghetti dinner and refreshments. *All ticket holders must be at least 18 years of age.*

The Barker Junior Firefighters are also looking for new members and will be participating in the open house. They also have address signs available for \$15/ea.

Did you remember to check the batteries in your smoke detectors and CO alarms when you set your clock forward? If not, take the time to check now.

As always, if anyone needs a home fire inspection, smoke alarm, CO alarm/inspection, fire prevention tips, or would like to take a CPR class, please do not hesitate to contact myself at 830-4158 or ask any firefighter for assistance. **We will be more than happy to assist you!**



Did you know that you can recycle at the Town Hall? We have receptacles to collect flags, toner cartridges, cell phones, eyeglasses and household batteries.



HISTORIAN'S CORNER

By: Pete Devereaux 795-3575



The secret of getting ahead is getting started. This is one of those stories.

The Barker Free Library opened its doors on Saturday, October 10, 1936. It's actual beginning was in April 1934 when a group of young men and women (including Mr. Milford Hessel and Miss Priscilla Wolff) held a meeting at the Fireman's Hall to organize a club to sponsor civic projects such as a public library and more. They named themselves the Barker Chamber of Commerce, later changed to Barker Jr. Chamber of Commerce.

They worked hard, sponsored projects and raised money to fulfill their dreams. In October 1934 they tested the waters. Would town taxpayers approve spending \$500 a year for a public library? They couldn't get enough people to sign the petition to even have a vote!! Don't give up, try again. The next year they succeeded in having the \$500 appropriation voted on. It was turned down!!

A "Public Library", supported completely by public money. The Jr. Chamber of Commerce decided to start a "Free Library". It would be supported almost entirely by private funds. They had enough money in their treasury to rent a room, buy bookcases, some furniture, office supplies, a stove, fuel and lights, but no money was left to buy books. So they wrote to the Agriculture College in Ithaca for bulletins on many subjects. They also requested a loan of 150 books from the state library in Albany.

The first of October 1936, the Chamber rented a small room on Main St. that had been a barber shop. (About where Key Bank is now.) They got busy with building supplies, even the women helped. They announced that the library would be open October 10, 1936 at 2:00PM.

The bulletins arrived and were placed on the new shelves, BUT on opening day still no books from Albany. A freight train arrived at the station, just before the scheduled opening with two heavy boxes -- 150 books for the Barker Jr. Chamber Library! The books were quickly carried to the library room, checked over and placed on the newly painted shelves. Now they were ready for their patrons.

People came and looked, went home and returned with bundles of books. Several hundred books were donated the first week. A Hartland Rd. resident donated 150, a resident of Batavia read in the paper that a library was started and sent 300 books. New bookcases were built every month. The Jr. Chamber couldn't afford to hire a librarian, so members volunteered their services.

April 1937, the library was only six months old, it had 1500 donated books. The room was too small so the library was moved to larger quarters in the old IOOF building on Quaker St. The building is currently abandoned and is just south of Atlantic Transformers.

There is much more to the library story but space does not allow for a complete history. To summarize the story, however, in 1969 it was decided to remodel the vacated NY Central RR Station on Main St. to accommodate the growing need for new facilities. In 1989 an addition was added. Now, 77 years later, the Barker Free Library remains an outstanding accomplishment for present and future friends.

Aware of changing needs and budget crunches, the library trustees formed a "Friends of the Barker Free Library" in the late 1990's. The first group of officers were Julie Hoffman, President, Kathie Smith, Secretary, and Paula Curry, Treasurer. The group still exists today and the meetings are held the last Monday of every month at the library. The current officers are Ellen Hess, President, Marilyn Zaciewski, Secretary, and Tracy Carmer, Treasurer. As of this writing, the Library is in the process of trying to transition to a School District Public Library by a public vote.

(This article was originally published in a 1998 newsletter by Lorraine Wayner. It has been updated and is being republished with her permission.)



Assessor's Office

Dominic Penale—Assessor

Carol Maines—Clerk

795-3243

somersetassessor@roadrunner.com

Grievance Day is scheduled for Tuesday, May 28th from 4PM - 8PM by appointment only.

Also, we welcome **Anthony Dispenza** to the Town who will take the Assessor reins from Dominic in June!

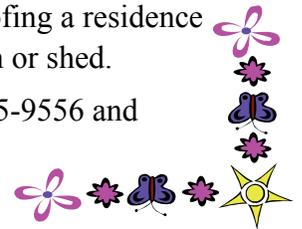
Regular office hours are Tuesdays 9AM - 1PM and Thursdays 12:30PM - 4:30PM—Appointments can be made for other times and feel free to send questions through email as well. We'll answer them quickly and can save you a trip!

CODE ENFORCEMENT NEWS

By Mark Remington 795-9556

I'd like to remind everyone that building permits are needed for pools and any construction, alteration or remodeling, regardless of size or location. A permit is also required if you are re-roofing a residence or any structure attached to the residence. You do not need a permit to re-roof a barn or shed.

If you have any questions at all about our town code, please call my office at 716-795-9556 and leave a message on my answering machine. I will return your call as soon as I can.



Happenings Around Town

- **April 21 - Barker Fire Dept Spring Raffle/Spaghetti Dinner 1PM-4PM, doors open at noon**
- **April 28 - Somerset Conservation Club Chicken BBQ 12pm - 2pm. Tickets are \$9 and are available pre-sale and at the door. Includes 1/2 chicken, green beans, applesauce, dessert, roll and butter**
- **Somerset Conservation Club Raffle - tickets are available from any member, and the winners will be drawn the day of the Chicken BBQ, April 28. Prizes are: \$250 Gas BBQ Grill, \$250 Fishing Package, 2 prizes of \$50 Bon-Ton Gift Card, and 2 prizes of \$50 Budwey's Market Gift Card**
- **May 1 - A representative from Assemblywoman Jane Corwin's office will be at the Town Hall from 10am to Noon to hear your concerns**
- **May 12 - Mother's Day Chicken BBQ at the Barker Lion's Club**
- **May 18 - Niagara Wine Trail tour from 11AM - 5PM sponsored by the Friends of the Barker Free Library. Tickets are \$30 and include tastings at 7 wineries, a glass w/charm, and bus. Tickets are available at the library or from any member of the Friends of the Barker Free Library**
- **August 3 - Town Wide Yard Sale**
- **September 15 - Somerset Historical Society Farm Festival at the Babcock House**

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Barker, NY 14012-0368

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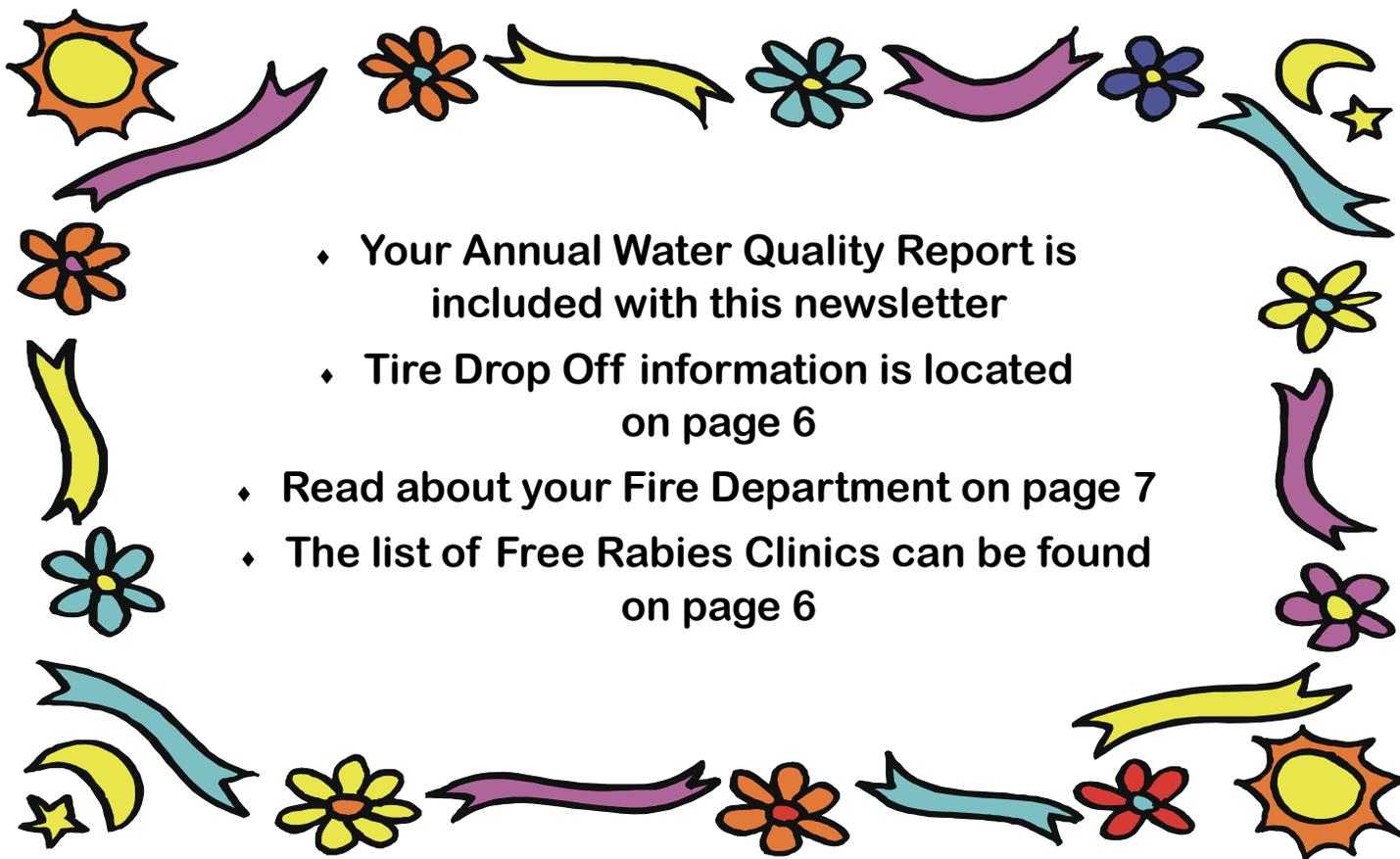
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Phone: 716-795-3575

Fax: 716-795-9041

Website: www.somersetny.org



- ◆ Your Annual Water Quality Report is included with this newsletter
- ◆ Tire Drop Off information is located on page 6
- ◆ Read about your Fire Department on page 7
- ◆ The list of Free Rabies Clinics can be found on page 6