



Town of Somerset



Volume 30, Issue 1

Spring 2015

From Your Town Clerk



Dear Residents,

I believe the best way to be good at a job is to continually learn, so I look forward to attending conferences. I also love to give people good news! Last month, both of those occurred. While at a conference for the Association of Towns I attended a class held by the NYS Comptroller's office. During this seminar they discussed the Unclaimed Funds program and told the Town Clerks that we could stop by their booth and they would inform us which of our residents have unclaimed funds. I was shocked to discover that I had a list of 281 residents! That is over 10% of our population! I am slowly making my way through the list and contacting those who have funds waiting to be claimed. It is not as easy as sitting down and sending out letters. Some of the residents have passed on, some of the names need investigating, and some people have moved. I am using white pages and/or social media to try to locate them or their relatives. As I progress through this, I will be sending out letters. I hope you are on the list!

Enjoy your spring!!

Tracy L. Carmer, Town Clerk/Editor

Have you ever thought about turning your food scraps or yard waste into compost? Here are a few websites you can visit for information:

www.cwmi.css.cornell.edu
www.compostory.org
www.compostingcouncil.org/home-composters



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In conjunction with BAS and Value Payment Systems, we offer you the opportunity to pay your tax bill and water/sewer bill online. Just visit our Website www.somersetny.org and click on the button "pay online".

Convenience Fee Schedule

\$1.75 Electronic Check Convenience Fee	\$3.95 Visa® Debit Card Convenience Fee	2.45% Credit Card Convenience Fee
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A Word From Your Supervisor

Daniel M. Engert - 795-3575, ext. 3 daniel.engert@gmail.com

Greetings, friends and neighbors! As I sit down and write to you, it appears as though the weather is finally breaking in our favor and the sun is out in abundance! Hooray! It has truly been a long and challenging winter season and I know that I speak for many who are looking forward to the longer days and warmer temperatures of spring!

One of very first calls that I received as your Town Supervisor in 2012, was from a resident who was concerned about the poor condition of West Somerset Road, the narrowing of the shoulder and the danger it presented to bicyclists and pedestrians, particularly the young children. A number of residents have expressed their similar concerns since. The Highway Superintendent advised me that it was a county owned road and so I contacted Legislator John Syracuse, Chairman of the Public Works Committee. He was successful to get our project moved up and funded. He and I met recently and he reported that the survey work is approximately 60% completed and there is \$400K left to finish surveying and the design phase which should be completed by this summer. The release of bids for the project is slated for 2016 and one of the decisions left to be made is which end of the road should start the construction. Legislator Syracuse is keeping a close eye on this project and we are very interested in your thoughts and recommendations, so please feel free to contact either of us concerning this long overdue infrastructure project.

For some time now, I have been communicating with you about a possible wind project that is being studied by Apex Green Energy. Until recently, the majority of the communications that I have personally received have been positive concerning a potential wind project in Somerset. I am now hearing from residents who are expressing their opposition and that is good. The Town Board and I encourage and welcome your thoughts and concerns on this very sensitive topic and want you to know that it is vitally important to provide your feedback in order that we, as your representatives can be effective in representing your interests, particularly on this type of issue which is proving to be so closely divided.

Having said that, I think it's very important that everyone has a very clear understanding of the situation presently. My fear is that misinformation and confusion over this potential project is spreading throughout the community. Firstly, the Town did not invite this wind developer into the Town nor does the Town have any business relationship with this developer. This project is not a Town project nor is it being promoted by the Town. Apex Green Energy has advised the Town that in order to determine the viability of a project in Somerset, they need to assess landowner interest to lease property for turbines and to assess wind data. Apex did apply for a special use permit to install a meteorological tower on Lower Lake Road to collect wind data last year and this was approved by the Planning Board. The Planning Board has approved similar meteorological tower requests by other wind developers in the past.

Wind resources in our Town have been studied by multiple wind developers going back many years. This is not a new phenomenon given our proximity to the open waters of Lake Ontario, the abundance of large areas of open farmland and the interconnection access to the electrical grid which is right next to the Somerset Power Plant. In fact, many of you will recall that our Town had a very serious and rigorous debate consisting of many open meetings and a public hearing concerning wind energy development just a few years ago. In early 2006, the Town established the Windmill Committee of the Town of Somerset to study and develop a comprehensive local law to permit the construction of commercial windmills within our town. This broad-based committee was comprised of community members, subject matter experts as well as Town officials who worked together to draft legislation which was ultimately referred for unanimous adoption by the Town Board in July of that year. The Town, enacting home rule principles, established its own parameters for commercial wind energy development. Since then, at least two commercial wind developers have studied a potential project in Somerset under these regulations but ultimately never pursued one.

In 2011, Governor Cuomo enacted Article 10 of the State Public Service Law, which substantially changed the game, so to speak. The Town joined many others who were on record opposing its adoption but nonetheless, it was enacted. Today, all new and repowered electrical generating facilities are permitted through a unified proceeding before the State's Public Service Commission Siting Board instead of through a local permitting process. The local law, as established by the Town must be taken into consideration, but it is not controlling and the Siting Board may elect to not apply our local law in whole or in part, particularly if it is found to be "unreasonably burdensome". If there is ever an application submitted for this project, it could be the very first one fully considered under this new law and possibly be a precedent setting legal case for electrical energy generation in New York State, particularly with respect to this test of "unreasonably burdensome".

Getting to know Somerset Conservation Club



Somerset Conservation Club, at 1129 Johnson Creek Road, was established in April 1961. The club started because Hartland Conservation Club had met their quota of 50 members. The first meeting was held in the Barker High School auditorium. Our founding fathers set the bylaws, and the first dues were a staggering \$2.00/year.

The property on the west side of the road was donated by William Ronson. There was approximately 13 acres of property. The first club building was a 6 x 6 civil defense building. It was formally used for looking for airplanes flying overhead during the war. The building was near an old well.

The property on the east side of the road was purchased from Clarence Stiggins. The club obtained a one room school house, which today is the center part of our club house. Through the years we have added a rifle range, horseshoe pits, a pavilion, a storage shed, trap houses and a swing set. There is also a pond by the rifle range.

In the past we held Christmas parties, Easter egg hunts and hayrides. The 4-H kids raised pheasants and released them at the club. There were many raffles, and chicken BBQs that were done in conjunction with the Barker Lion's Club. We now do our own BBQs.

Trap shooting didn't begin right away, but when it did, the trap leagues were huge. We still have a traveling winter league, made up of Somerset and surrounding clubs. Members and non-members are welcome to shoot or just hang out at the club. Bob Dewar, a non-member, shot in our league for many years. He recently passed on and will be missed by us all.

The Somerset Conservation Club is a fun, safe way to learn about nature, guns, bows, fishing or trapping. It is also a place to build great friendships. You can enjoy the peaceful walks through our woods, and on occasion watch a critter or two. Come visit our club for trap shooting every Sunday from 1pm—4pm beginning April 12, 2015. We also have a chicken BBQ with a \$5.00 side raffle on April 26, 2015.

We really appreciate your support and hope to see you there. While visiting, check out the plaques and photo albums, or just enjoy a chat with an old friend or two. See you there....

Jody Styres
President 2015

ATTENTION NIAGARA COUNTY HOMEOWNERS

Niagara Community Action Program, Inc. is pleased to announce the availability of grant funds for home repair to qualified Niagara County residents who own their own homes and reside in rural Niagara County.

They type of home repair can include gutters, downspouts, roofs, furnaces, hot water tanks, chimneys/foundations, porch repairs, replacement doors/windows, electrical and plumbing, accessibility modifications such as ramps, lifts, etc. Homeowners must meet income eligibility guidelines and other program criteria. Income guidelines vary depending upon the grant funding source.

Please call Niagara Community Action Program, Inc.'s Rural Preservation Program at 434-4679 between the hours of 7AM—3PM, Monday through Friday, or email them at markcrage@verizon.net for more information.



Water/Sewer Department News

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

Backflow Preventers - Backflow Preventers are *required* on all new homes, and homes that are being sold. Whether or not you live at the residence, if you sell your home it is your responsibility to install a Backflow Preventer. Your water/sewer account will not be transferred to the new owner's name without this requirement being met.

Before you dig - Remember to call 811 before you do any digging. It is the law that you must call at least **2 full business days in advance** so that the underground utilities have a chance to mark out their lines.

Town Employee Identification – If anyone comes to your door saying he is from our 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.

Electronic Recycling – As a reminder Electronic Recycling is ongoing and takes place at the Sewer Plant, at the corner of Quaker Road and Lower Lake Road, on garbage days from 7am—3pm.

Cemeteries – With the spring weather around the corner, a reminder of cemetery rules: Beginning May 15th, There may be one crock, vase of flowers, shepherd's hook or wreath per grave. These should be placed immediately next to the headstone. These items shall be removed by November 1st of each year. Wreaths may be placed on the graves after November 1st and shall be removed by April 1st. Eternal Flames may be left year round. Two Eternal Flames are allowed and must be located immediately next to each side of the headstone.

Park Pavilions – Also with the spring weather near if you would like to use the pavilions in the Somerset Park this season, please make a reservation by calling the Town Hall at 795-3575 extension 2 for the Town Clerk's office.

Annual Tire Drop Off—We have been advised by Modern that they no longer participate in this program. We want to continue this benefit for our residents so we are looking at other options that may be available. Please check our website periodically for updates.

Annual Water Quality Report—We used to enclose the report inside the newsletter, but beginning this year, we are allowed to fulfill the requirement by notifying our residents that they can view the report on our website. Go to www.somersetny.org and visit the Water Department page. The report will also be available to be viewed in person at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Town Hall in the Town Clerk's office, or at the Barker Public Library.

Veterans Municipal Outreach Program

A representative from the Niagara County Veterans Service Agency will be visiting municipal offices throughout Niagara County to help Veterans receive all of the benefits they are entitled to receive. Benefits of this nature are ever-changing and often a private discussion with fully accredited service officers results in the veteran receiving benefits and/or programs they may have not been aware of.

The Town of Somerset will be hosting this event on August 11, 2015. Appointments with the service officer are available from 9am to 2:30pm at the Town Hall at 8700 Haight Rd. Appointments are one hour in duration and can be scheduled by calling the Town Clerk's office at 716-795-3575, ext. 2. Please bring separation papers to the appointment.



BARKER FIRE DEPT. **By Scott Matheis, Sr.**

I would like to start by thanking everyone for their support throughout the years by attending our many fundraising events.

With that said tickets are out for our annual spring raffle to be held Sunday, April 19, 2015.

Contact any fire department member or stop by the hall on Thursday nights to get yours.

We are always in need of new members so on April 26th from 11 am to 2 pm we will be participating in a statewide recruitment program called Recruit NY. Fire Department members will be on hand to talk to you and show you what volunteering is all about. So stop in for some refreshments and find out what you can do for our community.

On Saturday, June 20th the Niagara County Sheriffs Marine Division will be holding a boater safety course at the fire hall. Cost is \$10.00 per person and you can register at their website.

Did you know the Fire Department offers CPR training? For a small fee we can get you the certification you need whether an individual or group. Contact us for more information.

Hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable summer...



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

I am aware that some anti-wind interest groups are now calling for the Town to just “Outright Ban” any commercial wind energy projects. I believe that this is largely a reflexive, immediate and potentially reckless act that could entirely remove any local control over this process. I am concerned about the very real prospect that an “Outright Ban” could be ruled as an “unreasonable burden” and if so, a wind energy project could proceed entirely without regard to any local considerations. It is my belief that we, as a community, must preserve all opportunities for local input and control during this process.

That being said, during this pre-application stage I can report that the Town Board is very seriously and intently studying all aspects of this situation and is considering all implications to the Town as we certainly recognize the immense responsibility that we have to our constituents. There are many, many factors that must be evaluated in order to determine the best course of action for the Town. The Town Board and I, as well as our attorneys, are very much engaged and will vigorously promote and if necessary, defend the very best interests of the Town. We look forward to hearing from you to help guide us in this process and we are committed to expending every reasonable resource available to be certain that Town interests are protected.

In closing, I am hopeful that regardless of whether a project is actually submitted for application or not, Somerset will epitomize the highest level of integrity, honor and respect by and between its residents as we move our community forward at this critical juncture. There is an awful lot to consider and this is an important conversation that we will need to have as a community. It is very early yet and we do not have a clear picture of all the factors that each of us will ultimately need to weigh in order to determine what is best for our Town’s future. Thank you for your time and I will look forward to hearing from you.

In your service,

Daniel M. Engert , Town Supervisor



News from Senator Robert G. Ortt (R) 62nd Senate District

First off, I'd like to thank all of you who supported and continue to believe in me as your elected representative in the state Senate. Though it was a short campaign run across a large district, I was able to meet many friends along the way, and I am looking forward to meeting many more during my term. I'm proud to represent the 62nd Senate District comprising Niagara, Orleans and Monroe counties. My wife Meghan and I are proud to call North Tonawanda home because we love this community - its history, beauty, and people.

Since I was sworn into office as your new state Senator in January, I've been doing my best to voice your concerns in the Capitol. I've sponsored several bills that protect our Second Amendment rights, create jobs, expand agriculture, improve infrastructure, and keep our communities safe. Some of that specific legislation includes repealing the SAFE Act, eliminating education cuts that dramatically hurt Upstate school districts, closing loopholes in sex offender laws, and holding the state accountable for maintaining canal lift bridges. These are only a few of the issues I've been addressing, but I hope to keep you engaged in the many other issues I'll be tackling.

Earlier this year, I was named chairman of the Standing Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities. I'm committed to improving mental health care services, education and housing, and vow to be a fierce advocate for those who need it most. In my opinion, the state has not provided sufficient answers to families with special needs children. Who will care for these children with aging parents? What will happen to many of them if their places of employment – sheltered workshops – close? These are just a few of the questions I'm determined to get answered.

I was also appointed to co-chair the Senate's Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction. Heroin abuse is a growing problem in our communities, and I'm steadfast on the need to take back our streets from dealers. We need better treatment programs and more effective preventable measures in order to combat this epidemic. The Task Force will be holding an open forum in the district in May to speak with a panel of experts, local law enforcement agencies, health professionals, and many of those affected in order to develop ways to reduce drug abuse and addiction.

Again, I'd like to thank all of my constituents for believing in me. Please feel free to call my office in Lockport at 716-434-0680 to let me know about issues in your neighborhood. Together, we can help make the 62nd Senate District the best community to live, work, and raise a family.

DOG CONTROL OFFICE: As the warm spring weather approaches, we will start seeing more dogs out playing in people's yards so here are some reminders. It is state law to license your dog. If you haven't done so yet, please visit the Town Hall to get a license. The cost is \$6.00 for a spayed/neutered dog, and \$16 for unspayed/unneutered dogs and you need proof of current rabies vaccination.

Dogs are required to be under the control of the owner at all times. If your dog is running at large, he may be taken to our shelter, Fort Hyde Kennels. If your dog is missing, please see if he is at the kennel.

If it is time for your dog to get his rabies vaccination, please see the back of this newsletter for upcoming **free rabies clinics**. These clinics are open to everyone so take advantage of them if you can!

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

By: Pete Devereaux 795-3575, ext. 7



Barker Band Tour Program Scheduled

Members of the Barker Central School Concert Band and their director, chaperones, instructors and parents are looking forward to 1 a.m. Monday April 11 when the band, director and chaperones will depart in three buses for the beginning of a concert tour of four New England States and one appearance in Eastern New York. Ten invitation concerts will be played in the following six days.

The itinerary was announced by Director Herbert F. Ludwig, Edward Kearbeline, Business manager, and Priscilla Wolff, a third member of the steering committee. The band will take the New York State Thruway to Albany, then travel north to Saratoga Springs through Rutland, Vt. Stopping at various places for sight-seeing and arrive in Bristol, N.H. in time for a concert that evening.

Tuesday will see the group moving down to Concord, N.H. for an assembly program in mid-day and then down to Manchester N.H. for an evening concert. Two appearances will be made in Massachusetts, one at Fitchburg the morning of April 13 and another at Weston on Wednesday evening of the same day.

There has been no day program scheduled for Thursday so that the group may tour Boston and vicinity. The band will, however, appear at possibly its largest concert in Danbury, Conn. on Thursday evening. This performance will be under the supervision of the Danbury Drum Corp and the present ticket sales indicate that some two thousand persons will fill the auditorium that evening.

After two morning assemblies on Friday at Danbury the group will move on to South Norwalk Conn. for an evening program. The final and tenth concert of the tour is scheduled across the border at Brewster, N.Y. the evening of April 16.

While the tour will provide many opportunities for sight-seeing and will in a sense be a real educational tour, it was also pointed out in a letter to the various New England communities by Milford H. Pratt, supervising principal, that "it is hoped that this tour will in effect be a good-will tour from New York's Niagara Frontier to the New England states being visited."

"That this may be realized, it has been arranged in each community and for each stop that students will be living in private homes of the communities visited and wherever possible will be living in homes interested in music and in homes that have children interested in public school music," Mr. Pratt said.

Four mothers will accompany the group as chaperones as well as well as five other members of the Barker Central School staff.

If anyone has any information or memorabilia from this trip or any other such trips, I would like to start a file for the Historians office. This is from an article in the Lockport Union-Sun and Journal dated March 29 1955.

I'm tired of winter, think green!!!

RECYCLING NEWS



It's been a long, hard winter, especially for recycling and trash collection crews navigating the snow. Thank you to residents for placing your containers at the curb properly – that helps with collection – and for continuing to recycle throughout the winter. With 206 tons of waste recycled and 754 tons disposed at the curb in 2014, Somerset's recycling rate is one of the best in the county thanks to your efforts.

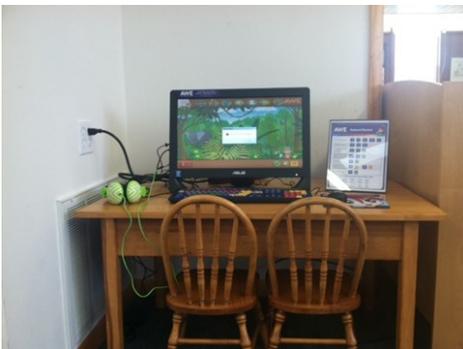
Now that spring is more than just wishful thinking, it is time to think about what we will do with all those things we don't want as we clean out the house, garage, etc. Keep in mind that many bulky items may be recycled, including broken sleds and shovels. Place bulky items in your recycling cart, or next to it, on a recycling week. Please do *not* recycle string lights in your recycling cart. They are accepted with electronic waste and by scrap metal recyclers.

New York State residents are now banned from disposing of covered electronic equipment in landfills or waste-to-energy facilities. You may bring electronic waste to the Water/Sewer Plant, 8500 Lower Lake Road, Barker, on Tuesdays from 7 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. to be recycled. You may also take it to Best Buy or contact the manufacturer for recycling options. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation website at (<http://bit.ly/NYewaste>) has manufacturers contact information.

Clothes, blankets, curtains, stuffed animals, shoes and many other textile items may be reused and recycled. The Re-Clothe NY website (www.NYtextiles.org) has information and a tool to find drop-off locations near you. All items donated for reuse and recycling should be clean, dry and odor free but holes and stains are okay.

Visit Modern's FAQ's & Resources webpage (www.ModernCorporation.com/faqs) and scroll to the bottom where you will find a page for each season of the year to remind you about even more items you may recycle. Learn more all year long at Modern's Facebook page ([Facebook.com/ModernDisposal](https://www.facebook.com/ModernDisposal)).

LIBRARY NEWS



Parents, check out our new AWE Early Literacy Station computer with your child. The computer is designed specifically for children ages 2 to 8 and features more than 70 educational software programs with hundreds of activities in science, math, creative arts, reading and more! The computer station is located in the children's room of the library and can be used with an adult library card.

Toddler Story Hour-- **Toddlers and their caregivers can join us three Mondays a month from 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM at the Barker Public Library for Toddler Story Hour. These are always fun filled sessions that help children learn to love reading. We'd love to see your toddler there! Stop in or call the library @ [716-795-3344](tel:716-795-3344) to register.**

BARKER LIBRARY'S NEW BOOK CLUB
3rd Monday of the month, at 6 PM



A story is always better if you have someone to share it with. What could be better than sharing it with a group of friends who have read it too? Come be a part of the Barker Library's Book Club! Call or sign up at the library. Happy Reading!

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT NEWS

Michael Flint, Highway Superintendent 795-3866



A quick note thanking all of you for being supportive and patient as we have battled another WNY record setting winter. Thanks for the kind words, cookies, and treats that some have dropped off for us. We have done the absolute best we could do to keep the roads open, clear, and safe for you and your families. Think Spring!

Thanks again,

Michael Flint and your Highway Dept. Crew



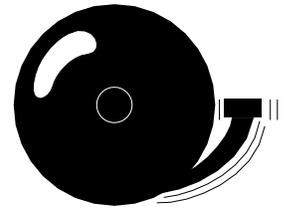
Habitat for Humanity—Baskets and Brunch, Saturday, April 18, 10:00AM Brookside Banquet Facility

Barker Fire Dept. Spring Raffle and Spaghetti Dinner—Sunday, April 19, 1:00PM, doors open at noon

Somerset Conservation Club Chicken Barbeque & Spring Raffle - Sunday, April 26, BBQ starts at noon, raffle at 2:00PM

COUNCILMAN'S CORNER

Submitted by Councilwoman Robin Jansen



Fire Safety – Smoke alarms save lives

Smoke detectors are considered to be your number one warning device. Thousands of people still die each year in home fires where smoke alarms aren't present. Having a smoke alarm cuts your chance of dying nearly in half if you have a home fire.

You need at least one working smoke alarm on every level of your home. Put them inside or near sleeping areas. Test smoke alarms once a month. Use a broom handle to gently push the "test button".

Put new batteries in alarms twice a year or when they 'chirp'. An easy way to remember that it's time to change batteries is 'change your clocks ... change your batteries'. When you 'spring forward' or 'fall back', it has been about 6 months and time to change your batteries. If your alarms are ten years old or older, get new ones.

Also important – Will your smoke alarms wake you up if you are sleeping? Have a family member test the alarm while you are napping so you will know if you'll wake up. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, get special smoke alarms that signal with strobe lights or vibrations.

By practicing fire safety procedures, you will be assuring yourself and your family of a fire safe environment.

Stay safe and be well

Hello Spring – we are glad you finally came.

**Volume 30, Issue 1
Spring 2015**

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

U.S. Postage
PAID
Middleport, NY
14105
Permit #21

BOXHOLDER

Remember to place your garbage and recycling to the road by 7AM on garbage day. The pick up schedule is subject to change and if you don't have your totes and/or bags to the road by then, you could miss the truck.

Free Rabies Immunization Clinics for 2015

- ◆ Saturday, April 11, 2pm - 4pm at the Town of Hartland Highway Garage
- ◆ Saturday, June 6, 9am - 11am at Hyde Park - Oasis/Centennial Pavillion (behind Ice Arena)
- ◆ Saturday, July 11, 9am - 11am at the Town of Lewiston Highway Garage
- ◆ Saturday, September 19, 9am - 11am at the Town of Lockport Highway Department
- ◆ Saturday, December 5, 2pm - 4pm at the City of North Tonawanda Public Works Department

***Cats and dogs receiving immunization WITHOUT PROOF of a previous rabies immunization will receive a certificate valid only for one year. Cats and dogs WITH PROOF of previous rabies immunizations will receive a certificate valid for three years. Ferrets must receive vaccinations annually, regardless of previous immunization.

***ALL ANIMALS must be properly restrained. Cats & Ferrets must be in a box or carrier. Dogs must be leashed.

***It is requested that anyone bringing more than six animals to one clinic, contact the Niagara County Department of Health at 716-439-7511 up to one week prior to the clinic so the paperwork can be processed more efficiently.

***Volunteers are welcomed. Please call 716-439-7511 if interested.