



# Town of Somerset

Volume 31, Issue 1

Spring 2016

## From Your Town Clerk

Dear Residents,

I'd like to thank all of the residents who are taking advantage of the services we offer at the town hall. Our business card file in the lobby is almost full and it's a great asset for those who may be looking for someone to do a job, or for a product that they would like to purchase locally. The Box Tops for Education box continues to fill up. The school receives 10 cents for each box top they turn in. That may not sound like much, but I can tell you as a former coordinator that it really adds up! Don't forget that you can dispose of your old flags here, along with old eye glasses and cell phones. We also are a passport acceptance facility so if you are in need of a passport or a renewal, we have the forms that you need. We also take pictures and process first-time passports.

As always, if there are any services you would like to see us offer at the town hall, please let me know and I will see if we can make it happen.

I hope everyone has a fantastic Spring!

Tracy L. Carmer, Town Clerk/Editor

### *Did you know:*

- *Alkaline batteries are no longer recycled. They get disposed of in the trash.*
- *Home Depot and Lowes accept CFL light bulbs (the new squiggly kind).*
- *Any store that gives you product in a plastic bag is required to accept those bags for recycling.*
- *You can drop off unused prescription medication at the Lockport Police Department or the Niagara County Jail. In 2015, 2,858 pounds of pharmaceuticals were collected!*

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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, I know that I speak for many who are looking forward to the longer days and warmer temperatures of spring. It was a very busy winter in Somerset and I want to share some highlights with you.

I will begin by providing a few brief updates on the industrial wind turbine project (Lighthouse Wind). 1) Apex Clean Energy has reported that they intend to formally file an application for the project by late summer, 2016; 2) Apex was required by law to provide \$70,350 in intervenor funds to be used by the municipalities to offset costs that were realized in order for them to respond and file meaningful comments on a Public Scoping Statement which was filed. On January 20, 2016, the administrative law judges awarded \$40,350 to the Town of Somerset, \$20,500 to the Town of Yates and \$9,500 to Save Ontario Shores, a citizen group. Unfortunately, the law does not take into consideration the real and true costs that are required to be borne by the municipalities; it only assigns a random amount of money that must be provided which is based upon the scope of a proposed project. In my opinion, it's just another one of the many, many serious flaws with the Article 10 law; 3) On February 4, 2016, Somerset resident Cathi Orr was appointed as one of two local ad hoc members of the Public Service Commission Siting Board. Ms. Orr will serve on the Siting Board for the special purpose of providing a local voice in each proceeding to be conducted to consider the Lighthouse Wind application. Mr. Russel Martino of Yates was appointed as the other ad hoc member; 4) On February 24, 2016, the Somerset Town Board, after months of study, due diligence and extensive community input, adopted a local law to most reasonably regulate any wind energy conversion system proposed within the town. The law, among many other things, requires wind developers to pay for a baseline study of the health of residents who want to take part, requires developers to pay reimbursements to landowners for property values that decline as a result of turbines, and it sets firm rules for decommissioning unused wind turbines. The Town Board adopted this local law to protect the health, safety and welfare of our residents. Somerset residents are substantially more protected under the new law. I would also note that in spite of Article 10 completely trampling Home Rule, reasonable local laws are not nullified under Article 10. Rather, there must be convincing evidence that they are, in fact, unreasonable and without justification in carrying out the responsibilities of local governments on behalf of their citizens and are consistent with the community's plans for its own prosperity. The Town of Somerset fully intends to argue the reasonableness and justifications of this local law at every step in this process to protect the interests of our community and to make certain that your voices are heard. I will endeavor to keep you informed throughout but I also encourage residents to come to regular and special meetings that are called by the Town Board. Additionally, please be encouraged submit comments to the Public Service Commission on this project. You can find a link on the Town website. ([www.somersetny.org](http://www.somersetny.org))

On another matter, I am pleased to report that Riesling Power LLC, recently completed its purchase of the Somerset Operating Company, our 675 mgw coal fired power plant. This is very good news for the employees as well as for Somerset. The new owners plan no layoffs and no changes in management or operations. They recognize that it's an extraordinarily well run asset with very good employees and very good management. I had a very good meeting with the new owners and plant management recently and I was assured that they are confident in the future of the Somerset plant and they weighed all the risks in

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determining to purchase the facility. They also have plans to develop the site and while they couldn't disclose the specifics, I am very encouraged by their initiative.

I am so grateful for the exceptional emergency services that our Somerset Police Department and the Barker Fire Department provide to our community. I want to particularly extend my profound gratitude for the excellent service that Officer Bobby Holmes performed on the evening of March 4, 2016. He dutifully conducted the business and vacation house checks that our patrol does each and every evening throughout the year. For those who may not be familiar with this program, residents and business owners can register to have their property checked on while they are away. At each home/business that is registered, the officers conduct a complete perimeter check of the property, checking doors and windows to enhance security for the homeowner while they are away. On this evening, Officer Holmes was checking a home on our lakefront when he alertly noticed a very peculiar smell and called me. I notified Barker Fire Chief (Town Councilman) Jeff Dewart who immediately coordinated the response. Upon entry, they determined that a malfunctioning furnace was the cause of the odor. Officer Holmes undoubtedly prevented a devastating fire to occur in a residential district while the owners were away. It was a great team effort by the police and fire departments in Somerset that night. Thank you, all!

Please note that the town will enjoy the benefit of a local **Farmer's Market** this year thanks to volunteers and the **Faith United Methodist Church**. The market will be held on **Thursdays from 5pm - 7pm** beginning on June 16, 2016. The market will run through September 15, 2016. Lastly, with the oncoming warmer weather, please be sure to drive safely throughout the Town and be extra careful for the sake of the many bicyclists, runners, and walkers who will soon be outside enjoying the season!

In your service,

*Daniel M. Engert*

Town Supervisor

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**COUNCILMAN'S CORNER**      *Submitted by Councilwoman Robin Jansen*

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*March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness*

*Many times we hear about cancer and the benefit of getting screened.*

*The National Cancer Institute's Colorectal Cancer Risk Assessment Tool may allow you to estimate the risk of colorectal cancer for people over the age 50. Calculate your risk and talk to your doctor for more information: <http://goo.gl/y6xp3X>*

*There are several life-saving screening options, even at home tests. Talk to your doctor for more information. Cancer Services Program of Niagara County can help.*

*Get Screened! Early detection can save your life.*

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## 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.

**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. Batteries and televisions with broken or dismantled glass will not be accepted. Thank you.

**Cemeteries** – With the spring weather around the corner, a reminder of cemetery rules: Beginning May 15<sup>th</sup>, 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 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Wreaths may be placed on the graves after November 1<sup>st</sup> and shall be removed by April 1<sup>st</sup>. 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 Water Quality Report** – You may review the AWQR on the Town’s website upon its completion. Go to [www.somersetny.org](http://www.somersetny.org) to view it and you may view it in person at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Town Hall at the Clerk’s office, or at the Barker Public Library.

**Sewer Inspections** – The Sewer Department will be conducting inspections throughout the sewer system for illegal connections within households. We will be looking for items such as sump pumps, downspouts, and etc. connected to the sewer. These connections must be removed.



On March 15th ENH converted the Emergency Department at the Newfane site to Express Care. The hours are Monday - Friday 12:00PM - 8:00PM; Saturday/Sunday 10:00AM - 6:00PM.

The facility will also continue to offer Radiology, Lab Draw, PT/OT and Dialysis.



## **News from Senator Robert G. Ort (R) 62nd Senate District**

### **ORTT OUTLINES 2016 NEW YORK STATE SENATE MAJORITY BUDGET PRIORITIES**

Several days ago, the New York State Senate passed its one-house budget resolution, kicking off negotiations with the Assembly and Governor to adopt this year's state budget. The Senate's proposal outlines benefits to working families, businesses and schools, including tax cuts, education funding, infrastructure and transportation parity, and funding to combat the heroin epidemic.

We're providing significant tax relief for middle-class taxpayers, small businesses and farmers. The Middle Class Income Tax Relief Program would create a new 25 percent tax rate reduction, saving millions of middle-class taxpayers an average of \$897.

This income tax cut will also benefit nearly 800,000 small businesses. For seniors, our budget will cut taxes on private pensions and retirement income, saving seniors an average of \$361 each year. For farms and small businesses, we eliminate the energy tax and build upon the Governor's small business tax breaks to help create jobs.

We're also pushing to make the statewide property tax cap permanent, so that we can provide certainty and relief to homeowners, small businesses and farmers. Along those lines, the STAR rebate check program would also be permanent under our plan. And, we're rejecting the Governor's proposal to cap savings on the STAR program. I understand the challenges of New York's crippling tax climate, and the annual property tax relief is something Western New Yorkers deserve in its entirety. This plan ensures that property owners continue to receive relief for years to come.

Last year, the State Legislature eliminated nearly all of the anti-Upstate, Gap Elimination Adjustment, which saved taxpayers in my district \$18 million. This year, the Senate is fighting to get rid of the remaining \$436 million of the GEA school budget cuts. This will provide record funding of \$1.6 billion to public schools across the state so that teachers and students won't have to struggle for the resources they desperately need.

The one-house budget also makes college more affordable for thousands of students and families. The Senate Republican conference has proposed \$87 million for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), as well as new major tax breaks to help middle-class families pay for college.

We're also calling for parity between upstate and downstate infrastructure funding. Upstate has been dealing with a disparity for our roads, bridges and public transportation for far too long, and now, the Senate Republican Majority is pumping the brakes on this unfair treatment.

The Senate's budget proposal also focuses on our veterans. It would allow our vets to obtain up to three years of additional credit toward their state retirement benefits for peacetime military service. Our veterans have done so much for us and our country, it's time we do more for them.

One of the last topics in the budget I'd like to highlight is the record funding of \$167 million to help put an end to the dangerous heroin crisis. The heroin epidemic is sweeping across our state at an alarming rate without discrimination of its victims. This budget proposal represents our conference's firm commitment to addressing and ultimately eradicating the epidemic in New York State. From educating the public, to helping addicts, to putting more dealers behind bars, we've put forth proposals to attack each area of this public health crisis. I'm hopeful the Assembly and Governor will follow our lead to deliver resources to communities and families in dire need of relief.

I believe our Senate Majority budget proposal touches on many of my legislative priorities that will help to make Western New York a better community to live, work, and raise a family. I look forward to working with the Assembly and the Governor in order to achieve these key goals and deliver a fiscally responsible, on-time budget by April 1.

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## HISTORIAN'S CORNER

By: Pete Devereaux 795-3575, ext. 7

I recently received several inquiries about the NYA Program at Barker Central School. I have a lot of information about this program but not enough room in this column to explain it all but will give some of the history and highlights.

Through the hard work of Lon McAdam Sr., a grant was secured from the Federal Government and in 1939 the National Youth Administration started in Barker Central School. They first used the shop in the 1924 building and then in 1940-1941 the N.Y.A. workshop was built on the north end of Barker Central School, the site of what is now the high school cafeteria. The boys helped erect the building under the direction of experienced contractors.

The N.Y.A. Residence Center was set up in the Sons of Veterans Hall on Church St. for out of town students who came to participate in the Trade School courses. The young men came from all over New York State and there was even a student from Germany who was brought here by the Board of Education and the Lions Club and spent his junior year in Barker.

Many of the young men who were in the NYA program graduated from Barker Central School but there were some who did not work out and left to go back home. There were a few who were sent home because of disciplinary problems. Some of the young men left to join the Armed Forces and were killed in action. For the most part these young men turned out quite well and made the program a huge success.

In 1946-1947 The Barker Trade School Airport was approved by the Civil Aeronautics Administration. It was in operation for flight instruction, ground school activities, commercial traffic and for farm dusting and spray service. Ground instruction in the school and on the airfield was provided under both Civil Aeronautics Administration primary and advanced ground school training. Flying lessons in conjunction with the general aircraft course and the veterans program were available under competent instruction.

I have many pictures and records of the students from the program. If anyone would like to view them just let me know and I will be glad to show them to you.



## RECYCLING NEWS

Thank you for making a difference! Town of Somerset residents recycled 155 tons or 17 % of the town's waste stream in 2015.

There are many benefits to recycling: it keeps material which can be reclaimed and re-used from being forever disposed of and supports local employment and our local economy.

All of the materials collected by Modern in Niagara County are processed locally! Our recycling facilities' employs 25 men and woman and our curbside collection team adds an additional 20 people to the recycling workforce.

As spring approaches, remember that you can recycle, "Rigid Plastics" such as empty plant pots and flats from greenhouses, seedling trays, empty buckets and children's outdoor play sets.

Remember; please do NOT place rubber or organic items such as garden hoses, garden gloves, or plant clippings in your recycling cart. Mulch grass and return organic material to your garden or nearby field.

Support your recycling program and demonstrate to your neighbors that you are investing in our future by recycling even more!

Visit Modern's FAQ's & Resources webpage ([www.ModernCorporation.com/fags](http://www.ModernCorporation.com/fags)) to learn even more items you may recycle. You may also find weekly recycling tips on Modern's Facebook page ([Facebook.com/ModernDisposal](https://www.facebook.com/ModernDisposal)).

## LIBRARY NEWS



Also visit  
the Barker Public Library  
And take the  
Check Out Challenge!

Pick up a punch card  
and complete the  
challenges for your  
chance to win some  
awesome prizes.

Stop by the library from  
April 11 - May 7 or visit  
**[CheckOutChallenge.com](http://CheckOutChallenge.com)**  
for more information.

**Barker Public Library**  
**BOOK SPINE**  
**POETRY CONTEST**  
April 11 - April 30

1st Prize: \$50 to The Book Shoppe in Medina  
2nd Prize: \$30 to Pulp 716 in Lockport  
3rd Prize: \$20 to Barnes & Noble

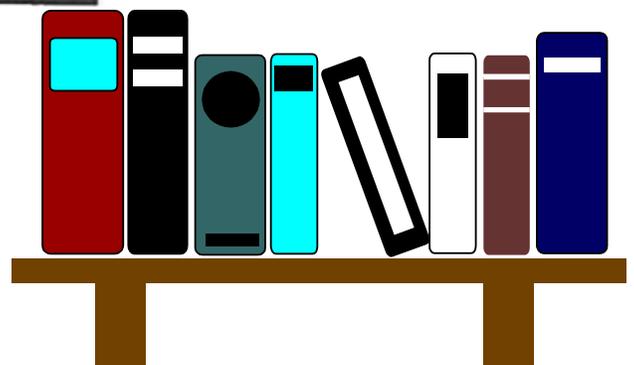
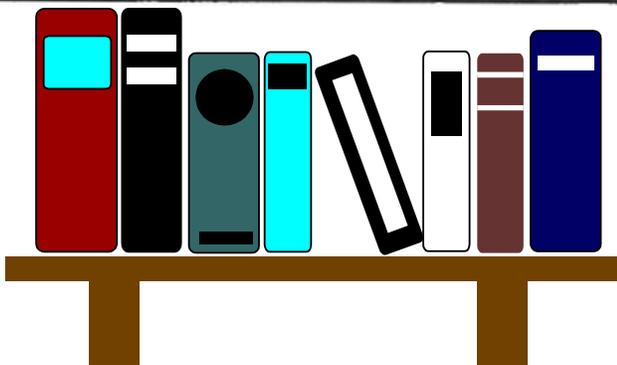
**HOW TO ENTER**

Visit the Barker Public Library  
Stack three or more books to make their titles into a poem  
Snap a pic and post it to Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter  
Tag it with #BarkerBookSpines  
Post as many as you want!

Winners will be announced on May 7th, make sure to check our Facebook

**Barker Public Library**

**Where the story never ends!**



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Phone: 716-795-3575  
Fax: 716-795-9041  
Website: [www.somersetny.org](http://www.somersetny.org)



- \* Donate Life Fun Run/Walk - April 2nd at 10:00AM
- \* Free Rabies Clinic at Town of Porter Highway Garage - April 9th 9:00AM - 11:00AM
- \* Barker Fire Department Spring Raffle - April 10th 1:00PM - 4:00PM
- \* Somerset Conservation Club Spring Chicken BBQ - April 24th 12:00PM - 2:00PM (take outs must be picked up by 1:30PM)
- \* Somerset Memorial Day Ceremony - May 30th at 9:00AM (**Note new time**)
- \* Farmer's Markets begin June 16th 5:00PM - 7:00PM

Watch our website for information on our annual Tire Drop Off. As soon as information is available it will be posted.