



Volume 30, Issue 2

Summer 2015

## From Your Town Clerk

Dear Residents,

The last time most of you saw me, I was in a cast recovering from a broken ankle. I am GLAD to tell you that the cast has been removed and I have started physical therapy. I would like to thank everyone for your well wishes. It truly means a lot to me!

If the newsletter looks a little different, it's because for the first time the Town has partnered with the Finance Academy at Barker Central School and we have two interns working with us this summer. The Supervisor interviewed candidates and selected Rebecca Stoloski and Jake Allen for the job. They have prepared most of this newsletter and I am appreciative that they were willing to take on this task. They are learning all aspects of how our town operates by shadowing in my office, along with the offices of the Supervisor, Assessor, Historian and the Court. You will likely be helped by them when you stop in to pay your water/sewer bill.

I hope you enjoy the rest of your summer!

Tracy L. Carmer, Town Clerk/Editor

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**Niagara County Hazardous Waste Drop Off**—The county will host a Drop Off on August 15 in Lockport. *Common household hazardous wastes that are acceptable for drop off include:* Latex Paint 3/4 can or more, Oil based Paint, Wood Stains and Preservatives, Automotive Fluids (antifreeze, brake, power steering and transmission fluids), Pesticides and Fertilizers, Flammable Products (gasoline, kerosene, thinners, strippers, solvents, glues, etc.), Household Cleaners (soaps, waxes, drain cleaners, etc.), Driveway Sealer, Pool and Photo Chemicals, Mercury (thermometers, thermostats), Fluorescent Bulbs.

You must have an appointment to drop anything off and appointments are limited. To make an appointment you may go to: <http://www.rethinkyourwaste.com> or call **716-439-7250** for more information.





## A Word From Your Supervisor

Daniel M. Engert - 795-3575, ext. 3 [daniel.engert@gmail.com](mailto:daniel.engert@gmail.com)

Greetings, friends and neighbors! At last, summertime is upon us here in Somerset! It's such a cherished time of year as we enjoy the sunshine and even the warm rain on occasion too, but then again, not on our graduation parties and get-togethers, right?! In any event, I hope that your gardens are flourishing and even if you don't grow your own, I trust that you are enjoying the fresh fruits and vegetables of our region!

Obviously, the most talked about issue within our town surrounds the potential Lighthouse Wind project. As your Town Supervisor, I want to be very clear about the history and current status of the project. I also want to absolutely assure you that I and the Town Board have and will continue to endeavor to be effective elected representatives for you in order to advocate for the desires and interests of our community.

In November 2013, Apex Clean Energy asked to meet with me to introduce their company and to advise me that they were interested in the wind resource in Somerset and had been meeting with large landowners in the Town of Somerset to determine whether there was enough interest to develop a potential wind energy project in the town. This was the very first time that I had ever heard of and/or knew that Apex was operating in our town. After this meeting, I announced this publically to the town board and community at the very next Town Board meeting on November 12, 2013. In the meantime, Apex Clean Energy, as a private business, continued to have discussions with private landowners throughout the Town of Somerset. In my opinion, it is not the place of the Town Supervisor to summarily reject any business and/or business opportunity from private citizens in our town. I do, however, believe that it is my role to make certain that the community is aware of any potential economic development and to promote a conversation to take place in order to allow the community to provide feedback on such business ventures being considered. At some point, in the early part of 2014, Apex indicated to me that they were not having a great deal of success signing landowners in Somerset by their standards but they were continuing their effort to sign leases nonetheless. They also told me that they were also studying the potential to expand slightly into the adjacent Town of Yates in Orleans County.

On October 31, 2014, Apex filed a Public Involvement Plan with the Public Service Commission indicating that a potential project was being considered. I announced this publically as soon after I became aware of it at the next public Town Board meeting on November 5, 2014. From November 2013 and up until this past February, the conversation concerning the wind project was relatively small. I wrote about it in the town newsletter and there were at least three media reports which covered the issue. Throughout this period, the majority of the comments, emails, phone calls and letters that I received were generally positive and or neutral about the project, possibly given the limited information that there was to consider concerning the size of the project, the size of the turbines, the proximity to residents and the amount of revenue that the project might generate for the town and the school. Since February 2015, more information has been presented to the community by Apex concerning the Lighthouse Wind project. They discussed that the scope of the project was 201 MW, included as many as 60-70 turbines, that they were considering turbines which are 570 feet tall and that the majority would be located within the Town of Somerset. They also disclosed that they intended to negotiate for \$1.5 million in PILOT payments, which would then be divided between six (6) taxing jurisdictions (Towns of Somerset/Yates; Lyndonville/Barker schools; Niagara/Orleans County). Since this time, more and more residents began speaking out about the project and largely their comments were negative. I began receiving significant feedback, including many emails, letters, phone calls and requests for meetings which were largely opposed to the Lighthouse Wind project for various reasons. Concerns over short and long term impacts on the landscape of the Town, property values, noise and shadow flicker as well as other health concerns related to vibration were the predominant concerns being brought forward. The Town Board meetings began to include dozens of public speakers who spoke against the Lighthouse Wind project and the local newspapers carried several negative letters to the editor which were published. Informational meetings were being organized and our community groups were also experiencing mixed reviews concerning the potential project.

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### A Word From Your Supervisor (cont'd from page 2)

Throughout this period, the Board and I continued to research wind energy generation and the Article X law in order to consider the most effective strategies to further the will and desires of the community, particularly since Article X took away our right to "home rule" by placing the ultimate decisions for these projects into the hands of unelected, appointed officials of the State. In my last newsletter, I encouraged the community to speak out and to let the Board know of your thoughts, concerns and opinions regarding this project. By May, it was apparent to me and the Board that the community was in consternation over this wind project. It was also abundantly clear that the citizens of Somerset were expressing themselves. The Town Board commissioned a committee to study and examine the current local law in order to address the concerns that were being brought forward and to preserve our local voice. This committee will convene before the end of July. The Town Board also commissioned a survey in order to provide even broader public participation. Every household in the town received a survey. Fifty-six percent (56%) returned their survey, which is an overwhelming response by any standard and the results were equally overwhelming. The results concluded that more than 67% of Somerset households do not want 60-70 commercial wind turbines to be located in Somerset. To me, the survey merely confirmed what I had been seeing, hearing and reading over the past several months and I immediately issued a statement on June 16, 2015, in the Union Sun and Journal as well as the Buffalo News, that I will oppose the Lighthouse Wind LLC project. The Town Board concurred. We have spent a great deal of time and effort throughout this process in order to be absolutely convinced of the overall will of the town. To that end, we acted decisively upon your direction and on July 8, 2015, the Somerset Town Board, representing what we truly believe to be the will of our community, passed a resolution to oppose this project.

I sincerely hope that the efforts, the diligence and the deliberations that I and your Town Board have expended in order to be absolutely convinced of your will and desires concerning this matter, demonstrates just how important your voice is to us. Apex has been quoted to say that the Board acted prematurely since their studies are not completed and a project application has not been submitted yet. I would simply say that the citizens of this community have overwhelmingly made a decision regarding this project. I do not feel that it is my place to question your rationale for reaching conclusions on this project or to suggest that you just need more information. You have done your own research, you have spoken with your neighbors, you have reached conclusions and you have communicated your conclusions to your elected representatives. It's the responsibility of your elected officials to carry your voice. It's that simple, in my mind and it's what the Board has committed to do. If Apex continues its studies and ultimately makes a decision to submit an application for the Lighthouse Wind project, be assured that the Somerset Town Board will continue to advocate for and defend the interests and desires of the town throughout all proceedings.

I have devoted almost my entire letter to you discussing the potential wind project. There are so many other matters that I have before the Town right now, like collective bargaining with the employees, 2016 budget preparations, PILOT negotiations with the UNYPP Somerset plant, marketing efforts at the former Verizon site parcel, expansion of the sewer district and many others. I believe that the wind project is of utmost concern to you at this time and I will keep you advised concerning the other matters moving forward.

In your service, Daniel M. Engert

### **COME CHECK OUT THE TOWN WIDE YARD SALE**

**AUGUST 1ST 9:00AM-5:00PM**

*Maps will be available on July 30th and can be picked up at the Town Hall, Village Hall and Thee Barker Store.*

*Call the Town Clerk's office at 716-795-3575 ext. 2 by July 27th to have your address marked on the map.*

*If you would like to hold your sale with others, Faith United Methodist Church has space for you for free. If you need a table, they are for \$5. Call 716-795-9945 for reservations. The church will be selling Sahlens Hot Dogs, popcorn, baked goods and beverages, along with flea items and clothes.*

*Countyline Church will be holding a bake sale at the Dewart's home at 1408 Quaker Road*



**Water/Sewer Department News**  
**Melvin Denny, Water/Sewer/Grounds Superintendent**  
795-9919

\*As most of you may know, Key Bank in Barker has closed. If you have in the past paid your water/sewer bills at the bank, you can mail them to PO Box 368, Barker NY 14012 or you may pay them in person at the Town Hall. We apologize for any inconvenience.

\***Before you Dig** - Please remember to call for underground utility location BEFORE you dig. Call 811.

\***Recycling** - You can drop off electronic recycling on your regular garbage day at the Sewer Plant at 8500 Lower Lake Road from 7am to 3pm. Some examples of items that can be dropped off are : Computers, printers, TV's, microwave ovens, telephones, radios, cables, wires, power cords and rechargeable dry cell batteries.

Items that may not be dropped off are: devices containing liquid mercury, Freon containing devices, household hazardous waste materials (see page 1) , material containing liquids, gas powered equipment, large appliances and wet cell batteries. If you have questions, please call 716-795-9919 or 716-795-3575.

**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.

**SOMERSET CONSERVATION CLUB**

**Jody Styres, President**

The Conservation Club offers club rentals year round. You have access to the dining hall, kitchen, pavilion and much more. For more information or to rent the club, please contact Lewis Dubois (716) 998-1581.

Our meeting night is every forth Wednesday of the month at 7PM. It is open to the public and new members are welcome!

Fall Chicken Dinner with Basket Raffle and Meat raffle side tickets will be held on August 30, 2015. Basket donations are gratefully accepted. See any member for tickets. The dinner tickets are \$9.00, and the meat raffle tickets are \$5.00.



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

In late June, the state Legislature finished up a lengthy and unpredictable session in Albany with a broad overall agreement on many legislative issues. With such a diverse state, regionally and politically, it was challenging to get all parties to reach an agreement. I'm encouraged that we were able to come to a settlement with the Governor and Assembly, while still fighting for Western New York.

There's good news on issues so important to Western New Yorkers, such as tax relief, education, and job creation.

Despite efforts to dramatically scale back the property tax cap, not only were we able to keep it intact, but we extended it for four years. Just this year, the property tax cap will save New York taxpayers over a billion dollars.

I believe the state should lead by example. That's why I fought to keep state spending under the same two percent growth that applies to local governments and school districts under the property tax cap. This fiscal restraint will save state taxpayers over 1.5 billion dollars this year alone. These savings will result in larger property tax relief checks and record funding for STAR and Enhanced Star. Together, these measures deliver major tax relief and provide stability to hard-working families, small businesses, and seniors who - for so many years - have been burdened by runaway government spending.

We also secured a key victory for Western New York children, parents, and teachers through record investments in our schools, libraries, and museums. We delivered an additional 25 million dollars in state education aid to schools in my district. We also eliminated nearly all of the anti-Upstate, Gap Elimination Adjustment, which will save taxpayers in my district 18 million dollars. Not only did we push back on some of the Governor's extreme education policies, we introduced our own measures to comprehensively review Common Core, release tests to help students and teachers, and ensure tests are age appropriate.

Job creation and economic development is another critical matter for Western New York and has been my top priority. We've taken important steps to strengthen agriculture, redevelop brownfields, reduce energy rates, fund infrastructure, and expand green technology. These are important first steps to rebuilding the Western New York economy.

In other areas, we increased critical services to veterans returning from combat, children without adequate health care, women subjected to rape and domestic violence, victims of mental illness, and individuals and families affected by disabilities. Stricter measures against drug dealers and sex offenders will keep our families and communities safe. For example, years after the Amanda Lynn Wienckowski tragedy - years after intense negotiations - I'm pleased to report that Amanda Lynn's law passed the Senate and Assembly.

But I'm also extremely disappointed in the actions - or inaction - taken by the New York City-dominated Assembly and a downstate liberal Governor on key issues. The Governor and Assembly walked away from most of our common sense reforms to the unconstitutional SAFE Act. The Governor threatened to shut down government unless legislators accepted his divisive education proposals. He has also vowed to proceed unilaterally on controversial issues like mandating a minimum wage that's unacceptable to our small businesses and non-profits, and appointing a special prosecutor to investigate our police officers.

Despite the progress, I'm not ready to declare victory because we still have a lot of work ahead of us to revitalize Western New York and fight back against the destructive policies of downstate politicians and special interests.

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# HISTORIAN'S CORNER

By: Pete Devereaux 795-3575, ext. 7

The 100th Anniversary of St. Patrick's Church

St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church was established in 1856 on Quaker Road just south of the Townline Road in the town of Hartland and remained there until 1915 at which time the new St. Patrick's Church was built and opened in Barker.



In 1912 the Rev. Daniel Malloy was appointed the pastor of St. Patrick's and began plans for a new church. The first step was raising money for the new church and Father Malloy took a parish census and assessed each family according to their means and consequently had raised most of the funds necessary for building the new church. The site for the new church was in the Village of Barker on the corner of Quaker Road and West Somerset Road. The site was approved by the most Rev. Charles Colton (Bishop of the Diocese Of Buffalo) and the Lay trustees of the church. The cornerstone was laid on November 22, 1914 and the first mass was celebrated on Christmas Eve of 1915.

In 2009 St. Patrick's Barker and St. Joseph's Lyndonville merged parishes and became Our Lady Of The Lake. The building still remains St. Patrick's and though there have been some changes over the years (the new elevator and the new crosses on the steeples and remodeled sanctuary) the beautiful red brick church still stands 100 years later. The Rev. James F. Hassett is the current administrator and priest at Barker. Rev. Hassett is now serving in his 20th year in Barker and is the 25th resident priest at St. Patrick's (including the Hartland site) and is the eleventh to serve in the Barker site.



**Bringing you up to speed**

## LIBRARY NEWS

**BTOP Express  
Gadgets and Gear**

**Technology Training!**

**Tuesday, August 4th @ 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
at Barker Public Library**

**Bring your own devices (E-readers, phones, laptops, tablets) along with  
your questions.**

**Sign up at the Library  
(716) 795-3344**

## RECYCLING NEWS



Somerset residents recycled 83 tons of material and disposed of 349 tons at the curb from January through June 2015. Thank you for continuing to recycle. Please remember:

If your garbage and/or recycling is not picked up on your collection day, leave it out or put it back out the next morning and call the Town Clerk's office, (716) 795-3575, so she can contact Modern to pick it up. Have containers at the curb by 7 a.m. to reduce missed pick-ups.

Keep in mind that many bulky items may be recycled, including plant pots, broken patio furniture, buckets, etc. Place bulky items in your recycling cart, or next to it, on a recycling week. The beverage bottle industry wants more recycled plastic to make new bottles. Recycling just twelve plastic bottles not only supplies raw materials to make new bottles, but it also saves enough energy in the process to run an air conditioner for an hour! So recycle those bottles when at home, work or at play.

New York State residents are banned from disposing of covered electronic equipment. Bring electronic waste to the Sewer/Water Plant, 8500 Lower Lake Road, Barker, on Tuesdays from 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. to be recycled. You may also take it to Best Buy or contact the manufacturer for recycling options. Find manufacturers contact information at <http://bit.ly/NYewaste>.

Leftover pool chemicals, household cleaners, propane tanks and other flammable or toxic materials are disposed most safely with household hazardous waste (HHW). Learn more and schedule an appointment for the next Niagara County HHW drop-off event at [www.rethinkyourwaste.com](http://www.rethinkyourwaste.com).

Visit Modern's FAQ's & Resources webpage ([www.ModernCorporation.com/faqs](http://www.ModernCorporation.com/faqs))



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### COUNCILMAN'S CORNER

*Submitted by Councilwoman Robin Jansen*

*July is here and school is out. Please take extra care in looking out for our children as they walk, play and ride their bikes, and make sure your dogs are properly restrained. The Town of Somerset has a leash law and all dogs are to be either leashed or fenced in. Dog bites are painful and frightening for people of all ages but especially children. Please be considerate of your neighbors and the people enjoying the summer outdoors and make sure your dog is leashed.*

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**Volume 30, Issue 2  
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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](http://www.somersetny.org)

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# RURAL ROUTE

* <b>Friday, July 31, 2015</b>	Faith United Methodist Church evening of music and fellowship
* <b>Saturday, August 1, 2015</b>	Town Wide Yard Sale 9AM—5PM
* <b>Sunday, August 2, 2015</b>	Historical Society Old Fashioned Picnic 1:30PM —bring a dish to pass
* <b>Tuesday, August 11, 2015</b>	Veterans Benefits sessions at Town Hall
* <b>Monday, August 17, 2015</b>	Faith United Methodist Church Ice Cream Social & Silent Auction 6PM with Community Band Concert at 7PM
* <b>Saturday, August 22, 2015</b>	100th Celebration of St. Patricks Church
* <b>Sunday, August 30, 2015</b>	Somerset Conservation Chicken BBQ and Meat Raffle
* <b>Sunday, September 13, 2015</b>	Our Lady of the Lake (Barker site) Basket Raffle doors open at 12:30PM
* <b>Sunday, September 20, 2015</b>	Historical Society Farm Festival at the Babcock House on Lake Road