



# Town of Somerset

Volume 29, Issue 1

Spring 2014

## From Your Town Clerk



Dear Residents,

I am very excited and honored to be preparing my first official newsletter as your Town Clerk. Becky's shoes will be hard to fill, but I will do my very best to continue the tradition of great customer service that you are accustomed to. There may be services we handle that you are not aware of so I invite everyone to stop for a visit. If there are services that you would like us to provide, I would be happy to explore the possibilities. If you have any issues, big or small, my door is always open. To those I already know, and to those whom I am yet to meet, I look forward to being your Town Clerk.

Tracy L. Carmer, Town Clerk/Editor

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.

### 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 September 23, 2014. 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.

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## A Word From Your Supervisor

As I am writing to you for our “Spring Newsletter”, we are in the midst of a blizzard warning; the snow is falling, the wind is howling and a county-wide travel advisory has been issued. Needless to say, it’s a challenge to be thinking “spring” at this point but we know it’s just around the corner, right!?! I certainly hope so! At any rate, please allow me to update you on a just a couple of the initiatives that the Town is currently undertaking.

As you may know, I recently proposed for the expansion of the fire protection district to include the Village of Barker. I was able to work collaboratively with Mayor Nellist and we were both completely convinced of its merits for our respective municipalities. Subsequently, the Town and Village Boards have requested legislation in order for this initiative to move forward. This is a shared service initiative that reduces governmental layering and benefits taxpayers and service-providers alike. In addition to the Town and Village, it’s also supported by the fire department as a win-win-win! By extending the district, we expand the tax base which reduces the tax rate that each property owner pays for fire and ambulance services. This also absolves the Village from any liability and worker’s compensation cost exposure that could cripple their budget and again provides an opportunity for the costs and risk to be spread equally and evenly throughout the entire Town. Expanding the district also accomplishes benefits for the Barker Fire Department. We have retained special counsel to guide us through this process and he explained that legislation has been on the books for many years that required insurance carriers to provide coverage for ambulance service on their plans. However, Village run fire departments were not allowed to bill them. Interestingly, when this legislation went into effect, insurance companies were given permission to raise their premiums (which we all pay) to cover this mandate and yet they pay out no claims. That just doesn’t seem right, but the insurance lobby has fought to keep it this way. However, under this model they will now be able to bill the insurance plans for ambulance calls and this revenue can reduce the amount that we would otherwise need to raise from taxes. The fire department will now have the ability to raise its own revenue which should offset a portion of the costs that come directly from the taxpayer. Lastly, this model will provide the fire department with a great deal more legal control of their operation and position it well for long term sustainability as they face the many challenges that volunteer fire departments are impacted by right now. I am pleased that Senator Maziarz championed the legislation and he is moving it forward quickly. We anticipate that the Governor will sign it by the summer of this year. I will certainly keep you posted.

Additionally, we are currently working with the County and the other municipalities to update our hazard mitigation plan. This plan provides the Town with the opportunity to recoup mitigation costs from FEMA in the event that we experience an identified hazard, such as a severe ice storm or flooding for example. It also provides an opportunity for our community to have a conversation about identifying potential hazards that we should plan for in order to make us more resilient in the event that we face such an incident. Very soon, there will be a link placed on the town website for you to provide community feedback in this area. If you would like to provide feedback and do not have access to a computer, please give me a call or stop by Town Hall and we will make sure that you receive a hard copy version to submit. We certainly look forward to hearing from the public regarding your hazard concerns that you believe the Town should plan for.

Lastly and along that same line, I want to quickly draw your attention to the Town’s website ([www.somersetny.org](http://www.somersetny.org)). We have added a great deal of very helpful content for you to conduct business right from the comfort of your home. We are putting more and more material there for you to pay bills, find forms, find information concerning assessments, your tax bill and much more concerning the services that the Town provides as well as links to other important material.

As we anticipate the final days of wintry weather and long for the change in season, please be mindful of the increased pedestrians, runners, and bicyclists who will soon be out and about the Town. Drive safely and share the road!

In your service, Daniel M. Engert – Town Supervisor

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We are pleased to provide police services to residents and businesses in the Town of Somerset. We strive to enhance the quality of life in the Town by providing patrol to deter and detect criminal activity and we also provide vehicle and traffic law enforcement to keep the roadways safe for all of our different types of commuters. The warmer weather allows us to enjoy getting outside to walk, run and bicycle. Please review some safety tips for sharing the road between bicycles and motor vehicles.

*Bicyclists have the right to share the road and travel in the same direction as motor vehicles. They are often difficult to notice in traffic and have little protection from a traffic crash. Check your vehicle's "blind spots" before you make a turn, parallel park, open a door or leave a curb. Don't rely only on your rearview mirrors -turn your head to look for bicyclists, skaters and scooter operators who maybe alongside or approaching.*

#### **Tips for sharing the road with bicyclists:**

- Drive Cautiously. Reduce speed when encountering cyclists. Don't tailgate, especially in bad weather. Recognize hazards cyclists may face and give them space.
- Yield to Cyclists. Bicycles are considered vehicles. Cyclists should be given the appropriate right of way. Allow extra time for cyclists to traverse intersections.
- Be Considerate. Scan for cyclists in traffic and at intersections. Do not blast your horn in close proximity to cyclists. Look for cyclists when opening doors.
- Pass with Care. When passing, leave four feet between you and a cyclist. Wait for safe road and traffic conditions before you pass. Check over your shoulder before moving back.
- Watch for Children. Children on bicycles are often unpredictable. Expect the unexpected and slow down. Don't expect children to know traffic laws. Because of their size children can be harder to see.

#### **Tips for bicyclists:**

- The same laws that apply to motorists apply to cyclists. Obey all traffic control devices and use hand signals to indicate stops and turns.
- Always wear a properly fitting helmet. Wear a helmet, no matter how short the trip.
- Ride on the right. Always ride in the same direction as traffic. Use the furthest right lane that heads to your destination. Slower moving cyclists and motorists stay to the right.
- Ride Predictably. Ride in a straight line and don't swerve in the road or between parked cars. Check for traffic before entering street or intersection. Anticipate hazards and adjust your position accordingly.
- Be visible. Wear brightly colored clothing that provides contrast. Use a white front light in low light conditions and a red rear light in low light conditions. Use a reflector or reflective tape or clothing anytime. Announce yourself by making eye contact with motorists.



# Water/Sewer Department News

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



**Our annual TIRE DROP OFF is scheduled for the following dates:**

- Monday, April 21 through Friday, April 25      7am – 3pm
- Monday, April 28 through Friday, May 2      7am – 3pm
- Saturday, May 4      8am – Noon

\*There is a limit of 8 tires per household and residents are required to sign in when dropping off tires. Thank you for your cooperation.

**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.

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<b>Assessor’s Office</b>	<b>795-3575, ext. 6</b>
<b>Anthony Dispenza—Assessor</b>	<b>somersetassessor@roadrunner.com</b>

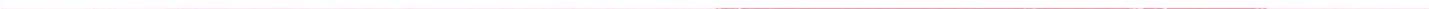
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Grievance Day is scheduled for Wednesday, May 28<sup>th</sup> from 4PM – 8PM by appointment only.

Regular office hours are Wednesdays, 8:30AM – 5:00PM and also by appointment.

Just a friendly reminder: All tax forms, as well as property tax, exemption, sale and inventory data can be found on-line. While at the Town of Somerset website, go to the Assessor Department page and click on the Quick Link titled Online Assessment Roll (OARS) and Tax Forms. There is also a link at this page which will take you to a PowerPoint presentation giving an overview of all the many features of OARS.

Enjoy your hard-earned spring, and stop in to see me anytime!





## **BARKER FIRE DEPT.**

**By Scott Matheis, Sr.**

The Fire Department has a busy year ahead so please mark the following dates on your calendars:

- May 18 - Spring Raffle
- July 26 - 100 Year Celebration - A Parade and our Annual Beer & Band Night
- August 2 - 100 Year Celebration continues with a banquet. Limited tickets will be available to the public.

A few notes:

With the long, cold winter finally behind us, everyone looks toward yard cleaning. PLEASE REMEMBER: ALL open burning is prohibited in New York State.

DEC recommends that you recycle all appropriate materials (such as newspaper, paper, glass and plastic) and compost your organic kitchen and garden waste.

Our Jr Firemen and Firewomen are selling address number reflective signs. Call 795-3011 to order yours.

Daylight Savings: We set the clocks ahead. Did you remember to change your smoke detector batteries?

Have you ever thought of learning CPR? We can help. The Barker Fire Department is accredited through the National Safety Council.

We are always accepting new members so if you are interested, stop by any Thursday evening and see what you can do to help your community.

Wishing you all a safe and enjoyable Summer!

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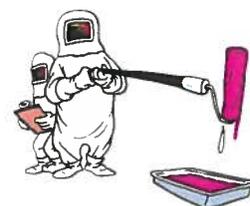
### **Household Chemicals Disposal Collection Events**

The Niagara County Refuse Disposal District will offer four Household Waste drop-off events in spring and fall of 2014.

To participate you must be a resident of Niagara County and waste cannot be from a business operation. An appointment must be scheduled prior to the event at: [www.rethinkyourwaste.com](http://www.rethinkyourwaste.com)

- April 26 at North Tonawanda Department of Public Works 753 Erie Ave from 10:00am to 2:00pm
- June 7 at Niagara Falls Public DPW, 1785 New Road from 10:00am to 2:00pm
- August 16 at Lockport Town Hall, 6560 Dysinger Road from 10:00am to 2:00pm
- September 27 in Lewiston at the top of South 8th Street and Seneca Street from 10:00am to 2:00pm

Acceptable items are: Latex paint (1/3 can or more), oil paint, wood stains, automotive fluids, pesticides & fertilizers, flammable products (gasoline, kerosene, thinners, strippers, solvents, glues), household cleaners (soaps, waxes, drain cleaners), driveway sealer, pool and photo chemicals, mercury (thermometers, thermostats), and fluorescent bulbs.



# HISTORIAN'S CORNER

By: Pete Devereaux 795-3575, ext. 7



The Barker Fire Dept. is celebrating it's 100th anniversary this year. They have some activities planned for the year, so keep an eye on the newsletter and the electronic sign (which I think is really cool) in front of the fire hall. As a past member of the Barker Fire Dept., I have had the privilege of working with the greatest people who give up a lot of their time, not just answering fire and ambulance calls, but all the training they do. They also have many fundraising activities that they work on all year long to help maintain the great organization that we have in our town.

It was also my privilege to be a member and work with 3 members of the 50 year club (members who were or are active for 50 years.) Leo Dutcher and Frank Gamble (both deceased) and Wally Coates, who is still active. Thank you for your many years of service to Somerset.

There was also for many years a Ladies Auxiliary consisting mostly of firemen's wives who, when fire calls came in, would prepare and serve food and beverage to the firemen any time of day or night. The Auxiliary also ran the kitchen for banquets, weddings and Bingo. Thank you to all of the ladies who gave of their time to help keep the organization going (whenever you were called on).

There is now a Junior Fireman's organization for young adults not old enough to be a fireman. This group of young people do a great job helping the firemen and they do a lot of training just like the firemen. Keep up the good work Juniors.

Thank you to all the men and women who have served in the past or are still serving the Town of Somerset. Congratulations on your 100th Anniversary.



Did you know? Niagara County Entertainment, LLC is a new and exciting way to promote Niagara County, New York!

## [www.niagaracountyentertainment.com](http://www.niagaracountyentertainment.com)

A searchable database has been created for all of Niagara County's events, entertainment venues and talent. This allows locals and tourists to find out what is going on. This acts as a local hub driving traffic to your event and/or website. Events can include:

Art Exhibits, Car Shows, Concerts, Educational, Festivals, Fund Raisers, Historical, Holiday, Local Farms, Local Musicians, Local Sports, Local Wineries, Meet & Greets, Movies, Native American, Nature, Parades, Political, Recreational, Religious, Seminars, Theatre/Plays, Tourist Sites & Much More.

This service is FREE to use and FREE to Post. Events have to take place in Niagara County and be open to public attendance.

### **Somerset Conservation Club Chicken Barbeque & Spring Raffle - Sunday, April 27, 2014**

\$9.00 per ticket for Chicken BBQ from 11:30am until gone; Raffle tickets are \$5.00 each with the following prizes: BBQ Grill, chainsaw, Home Depot Gift Cards (2), Bon Ton Gift Cards (2), Budwey's Gift Card (1), Central Tractor Gift Card (1). Tickets may be purchased from any member. If you are interested in joining the club, contact any member or stop in to the club for an application.

**RECYCLING NEWS**

In 2012, the ratio of trash to recycling was 90/10, but in 2013, due to changes made in the recycling program, the ratio improved to 83/17. By providing each residential parcel the capacity to recycle, the data indicates that residents pulled recyclable material from their trash cans and used their recycling carts. Essentially, Somerset residents responded by increasing their recycling output by 84% in one year! Congratulations to you for doing exactly what this program was designed to do...reduce collection costs, increase volume of recyclables collected and decrease the volume of recyclables getting thrown away.

	2012	2013	delta	
Trash	809.42	742.67	-66.75	-8%
Recycling	84.12	154.59	70.47	84%
TOTAL	893.54	897.26		

Please place your trash and recycling carts with the wheels toward the house and leave three feet of space between your carts and other objects to help with efficiency of collection. If you generate a small volume of waste or recycling, you may put your cart out for collection only when full. Be sure it is your normal week for recycling collection when putting that cart out, otherwise the recycling will be disposed with trash or left uncollected.

Electronic items like TVs, computer monitors, VCR/DVD players, video game consoles and other covered electronic devices should be recycled by taking them to our municipal drop-off location at the Sewer/Water 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.

As we move into spring, many of you will be ready to clean out your house, garage or basement. Keep in mind that many items can be recycled or donated for reuse. Check the “What Can I Recycle?” list on your cart or visit [ModernCorporation.com](http://ModernCorporation.com) to learn more. Get even more great waste reduction and recycling ideas by ‘liking’ Modern’s Facebook page at Facebook.com/ModernDisposal.



**Free Rabies Immunization Clinics for 2014**

- ◆ Saturday, April 12, 2pm - 4pm at the Town of Somerset Highway Garage
- ◆ Saturday, June 14, 2pm - 4pm at Hyde Park - Oasis/Centennial Pavillion (behind Ice Arena)
- ◆ Saturday, July 12, 2pm - 4pm at the Town of Wilson Highway Garage
- ◆ Saturday, September 20, 2pm - 4pm at the Town of Lockport Highway Department
- ◆ Saturday, December 6, 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.

