



Town of Somerset



Volume 26, Issue 3

Holidays 2011



Dear Residents,

As we move ahead this time of year and look forward to a New Year, we always have news to share with you. Please read through your newsletter, clip and save pertinent information and as always, if you have any questions or comments, feel free to call me at the Town Clerk's Office at 795-3575. May you enjoy the memories that you have made during this holiday season and a very happy and healthy New Year.

Becky Connolly, Town Clerk

We still have our history books "Welcome to Somerset" available at the Town Hall. Our former Historian, Lorraine Wayner, is the author of this magnificent recollection of the history of our Town. It makes a wonderful gift any time of the year. They are available at the Town Hall for \$10.



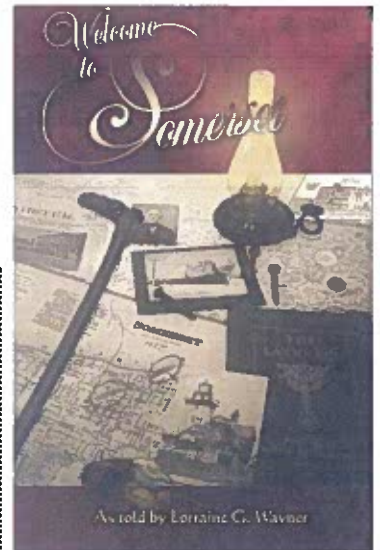
GARBAGE
COLLECTION
FOR
CHRISTMAS
AND NEW
YEARS is
changed to
Wednesday
December 28th
and January 4th,
2012.

ELECTRONIC RECYCLING **DROP-OFF**

is held every garbage day from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, 8500 Lower Lake Road. You may bring your items and drop them off. Help save our Earth!

Items that will be accepted include:

Computers, televisions (as well as cathode ray tubes), small scale servers, Computer peripherals including monitors, electronic keyboards, electronic mice or similar pointing devices, facsimile machines, document scanners and printers that are used with a computer and weighing less than 100 lbs., VCRs, digital video recorders, portable digital music players, DVD players, digital converter boxes, cable or satellite receivers, electronic or video game consoles and any cable, cord or wiring permanently affixed to or incorporated into such product.



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From Your Town Clerk—Becky Connolly , 795-3575

DOG LICENSES: We are receiving numerous complaints about dogs not being under the control of the owner. After investigating, we find that these dogs are not licensed. New York State law requires dogs age 4 months or older to be licensed. You may bring your up to date rabies information to the Town Clerk's Office to purchase the license. License fees are \$6.00 for spayed and neutered dogs and \$16.00 for all unspayed and unneutered dogs. If a dog license is not paid within 60 days of the date of renewal, there will be a \$10.00 late fee added to the license fee. Town Law requires dogs be under the control of the owner at all times. Unfortunately this is not always the case. Please help us keep a safe environment and license your dog (s).



PASSPORTS: Our office is a processing agent for passports and passport photos. If you are anticipating traveling out of the country, please contact my office for information on what is required. You may also access our website for information.

ON-LINE PAYMENTS: In order to better serve you, I am currently working with a company to make utility bills and taxes available for payment on line. Watch our website for further information. I hope to have this service available by early January.

Tax Collection Hours

Taxes can be paid at the Somerset Town Hall during the following times beginning January 3rd:

January—Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
(No collection on Wednesdays) 9:00 AM— 4:30 PM

February and March—Fridays only—9:00 AM—4:30PM



HISTORIAN'S CORNER

By: Peter Devereaux 795-3459

Mary B (Seeley) Lapage passed away on October 29, 2011. Born on October 24, 1910, she was the fourth child of Glen and Cora Seeley. It is believed that she was the last child to be born in the 30 Mile Point Lighthouse. Her father was the lighthouse keeper from 1903-1945.

At an interview with Lorraine Wayner in 1995, Mary remembered how difficult it was for her parents to get the kids to school. There was a dirt road leading to the lighthouse and there were no snow plows at that time so her father had to shovel a lot of snow. She said they borrowed a horse and cutter many times to make the trip to the country school that her brothers and sister attended. Mary didn't attend the country school because by the time she was ready for school, the 1911 building of Barker Central School was completed and they attended school there.

Mary recalled that when they had company, she would always take her friends to the top landing of the lighthouse so they could see the countryside and the lake. Mary's parents liked animals and at times had quite a variety. She remembers they had a pet monkey and one day her mother hung out the laundry and hitched the monkey by the back door near the clothes line. She went inside to continue her household chores and when she came back out to get the clothes, the monkey had apparently gotten cold and pulled the clothes down and was wrapped up in them to get warm.

Deputy Supervisor's Corner

By: Daniel Engert 795-3596 daniel.engert@gmail.com



Greetings to friends and neighbors in Somerset! The beginning of winter is exciting as we anticipate the holiday season, gathering for fellowship with friends and family and outdoor activities in the cold and snow!

On January 1, as a result of your vote of confidence to serve you in the capacity of your Town Supervisor, I will begin a two year term of employment working for YOU. I am enthusiastic about the opportunity and humbled by your confidence. At this time, I would also like to acknowledge and thank Rich Meyers for his service to the Town over the past five years.

A strong team is assembled to provide the necessary support and guidance to effectively maneuver your town during these challenging times. Randy Wayner will serve as the Deputy Supervisor and Mindy Austin will serve as my Confidential Assistant. I am also excited to work alongside your Town Board which will consist of Gary Alt, Robin Jansen and Jeffrey Dewart. Immediately, we will begin a concerted focus to review our master plan and to strategically address land use and development issues that are not business friendly for our community. Our objective will be to better position the Town of Somerset for economic development success and to learn from recent events in order to strengthen our ability to be successful in building out our business tax base and landing jobs in our community.

Simultaneously, our attention will be squarely focused upon the AES Somerset facility and we will continue to engage in every effort to advocate, assist and advance policies that are necessary for continued successful operations at this plant. We are keenly aware of the significance of this facility in our community. We have already seen the positive impact that the plant can have in terms of economic development opportunities here, not to mention the tax revenue benefits and the employment of many of our good friends, family and neighbors. We are engaging with local, state and federal officials to call for consideration of the impact facing us here and throughout the state and to strategically consider a proper balance between environmental issues and the business and consumer interests! As you are well aware, Legislator John Syracuse and I have been extremely aggressive in bringing attention to blatant anti-coal environmental policies and particularly calling for the repeal of New York's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) which unfairly taxes NY coal plants and the NY ratepayers.

In closing, I truly believe that your Town employees, the elected officials and department heads perform exceptional service for the residents in Somerset and I am eager to join alongside them to continue this work. As a Town Board, we are very aware of the basic services that you demand and deserve from your Town. We are committed to being YOUR voice and responding to YOUR hopes and desires concerning YOUR expectations of the local government in Somerset. On behalf of the Supervisor and Town Board, we wish everyone a blessed and joyous Christmas!





Just a few friendly reminders from the Highway Dept: leaving snow on the highway is prohibited by Section 1219 of the Vehicle and Traffic Law and Section 214 of Highway Law of the State of New York.

Parking on any Town Road is prohibited in accordance with provisions of the Town of Somerset code 191-15 as specified in Schedule XI (191-33) 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. From November 1 to April 1.

NEWS FROM THE HIGHWAY DEPT.

Kenneth J Bigelow, Superintendent of Highways
795-3866

The bridge project on Lower Lake Road between Quaker and Johnson Creek roads is finally completed. The IPP (Initial Project Proposal) was submitted to the NYSDOT on 5/9/2008 and the new bridge opened to traffic on 10/31/2011. Thirty nine months of design and finding our way through governmental red tape and approximately 3 1/2 months for construction. Thanks goes to Wendel Duscherer Engineers and CATCO Construction for a job well done. The old twin pipes were installed in 1955 and served the Town well.

I am confident that the new structure will also.

I would like to thank everyone for your patience and cooperation during this year filled with bridge construction and town highway resurfacing projects. Multiple jobs have been completed including several Niagara County bridge deck repairs.

The Employees of the Highway Dept. wish everyone a Safe and Happy Holiday Season. Drive Carefully

DROP OFF CENTER FOR YOUR USED TONER CARTRIDGES / FLAGS / CELL PHONES / GLASSES AND HEARING AIDS

You may dispose of your tattered flags, used cell phones, used toner cartridges from your printers, old eye glasses and hearing aids at the Town Hall. We will recycle them for you.



Assessor's Office

Assessor- Bob Glidden

795-3243

Clerk- Carol Maines

somersetassessor@roadrunner.com

Reminder that **Exemption Renewals** for Enhanced Star, Senior Exemption, Disabled and Agricultural are due in our office by **March 1, 2012**. If any property owner will turn 65 before December 31, 2012 you may apply for the Enhanced Star Exemption.

Wednesday January 25, 2012 at 7:00 pm at the Somerset Town Hall we will be conducting a **Public Information Meeting** on the 2012 town wide revaluation project.

This project consisted of an inspection from the public right-of-way of each property in the Town and placing a fair & equitable market value on each property.

The purpose of this revaluation is to ensure that all properties in the Town of Somerset are assessed on a consistent, fair and equitable basis. Any and all interested parties are encouraged to attend. If you have any questions you may call this office during normal business hours: Monday 9 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Water/Sewer Department News

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



A few reminders from the Water/Sewer Department:

DOUBLE CHECK BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICES are required on all new construction and when there is a **CHANGE** of property owner. Final readings for property sold will include inspection for the double check valve.

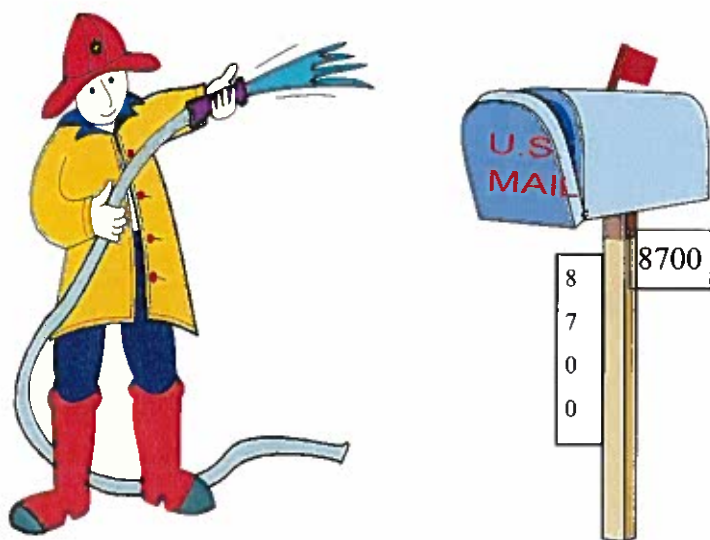
For your safety and that of your neighbors, please keep the **fire hydrant** by your house clear of trees, shrubs and snow. This is crucial in case of a fire and for the maintenance of the hydrant. New York State law requires a minimum of 3 feet of clearance.

To minimize the possibility of sewer problems, snow and debris should be kept clear of your **sewer vent pipe**. Also, care should be taken not to damage your vent pipe during snow removal. Please contact us if your vent pipe has been damaged.

If anyone comes to your door saying he is from this 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.

Is Your House Number Visible from the Road?

Some of our residences have reflective markings on their house or close to it, however, we find that the house numbers on at least 1/2 of our residences are non-existent or not visible from the road. What will the Emergency Responders do if you have an emergency at your home? Precious seconds and minutes will be wasted trying to locate you. **PLEASE** consider purchasing a reflective sign from our Junior Firemen. Order forms are available at the Town Hall. We would be happy to mail you one—just call the Town Clerk at 795-3575.



Councilman's Corner

By: Randy Wayner 795-9316 rjwvw@juno.com



The 2012 Budget:

Greetings to the residents and businesses of Somerset.

A recently published article in a local newspaper has raised some questions regarding the Town's 2012 budget. Accordingly, I thought it would be informational to provide a brief outline of the budget process and list just a few highlights.

The process begins with the Supervisor gathering information from the Department Heads. They provide estimates of the revenue and expenditures that can be expected from their departments during the upcoming year. External service providers also provide information relative to their areas of expertise. Examples of these service providers are: The Barker Volunteer Fire Department, The Village of Barker - for local Police Services and the current legal and engineering firms. After this information is gathered, the Supervisor takes into account all of the other sources of revenue, such as sales tax and all of the other expected expenditures. He prepares his Proposed Budget and presents it to the Town Board. The Town Board reviews the proposed budget line by line during publically announced work sessions. The Department Heads and external service providers are invited to this session as well. Upon completion of their review and after incorporating whatever changes were agreed upon, the Board schedules a Public Hearing for the residents and taxpayers to provide their input. After the Public Hearing, the Board inserts any changes that may have resulted from their input and adopts the Final Budget for the upcoming calendar year. There are statutory deadlines in place to make sure that this process moves along at an efficient, but not hurried pace.

Some highlights of the 2012 Budget include:

Despite what was reported in the local newspaper, Town taxes will not go up.

The 2012 budget is \$495,387 less than the 2011 budget.

A specific line item has been added that designates funds for economic development.

Modest pay raises of 2% were given to all full time employees and part time appointed officials.

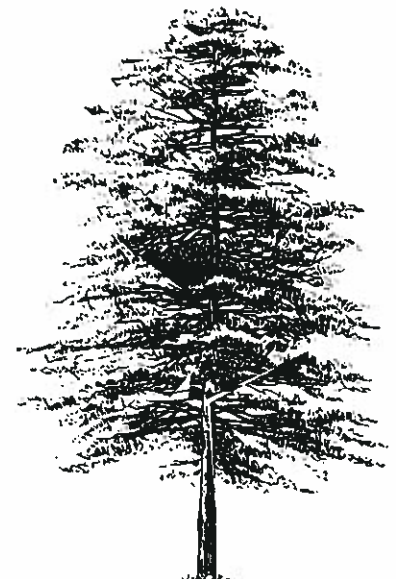
The Supervisor and Councilpersons will not be receiving any increase in salary or benefits.

The adopted 2012 budget for the Town is \$3,538,249

I hope this sheds some light on the process, highlights, and the dollars involved.
The entire adopted budget can be viewed on the Town's website:

www.somersetny.org

With warm regards for a Blessed Christmas with friends and family,



NEWS FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

By Randy Hildebrant, Fire Chief



This is the time of year that we use our alternative heating devices, wood stoves and fireplaces. I would like to remind those of you who use fireplaces and woodstoves, to have your chimneys cleaned and inspected yearly BEFORE using your stove. A chimney fire happens quickly and without warning. They can burn inside your walls for hours without detection. They're especially dangerous when no one's home. By the time the fire's discovered, it's usually too late to save the home.

Another cause of many house fires is the use of power strips. The problem is that people use these devices with appliances that require too much electricity causing the power strips to overload. Regardless of internal circuit breakers, these devices still fail. If you're going to use them, DO NOT plug in any more appliances than the strip can handle. Be sure that the power strip has a UL label and has been tested. The \$1.99 power strips at discount stores ARE NOT SAFE. Many of these strips do not have the safety features that are required by the Underwriters Laboratories.

As always, the members of the Barker Fire Dept are here to assist our residents in the practice of fire prevention. If you need us to help you establish a fire escape plan or any other fire prevention matter, do not hesitate to call me at 471-6080 at anytime. I, or one of our firefighters, will be happy to come to your home and assist you.



CODE ENFORCEMENT

By Randy Hildebrant 795-9556



As a reminder, all wood burning stoves, chimneys, fireplaces and outdoor wood boilers require a permit in the Town of Somerset. Insurance companies call this office on a regular basis inquiring on residents that have "alternative heating devices" to see if they've been inspected.

If you have any questions on building and zoning issues or would like information on fire prevention, please don't hesitate to call my office at 795-9556. I will be happy to assist you.

Wishing all of you a healthy and happy 2012!

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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

U.S. Postage
Standard
PAID
Barker, NY 14012
Permit #21

* Please consider donating to our local food *
* pantry at Faith United Methodist Church. *
* There is always a need for items to feed our *
* community. They are especially in need of dry *
* staples such as cereal, stuffing mix, macaroni *
* and cheese, rice, peanut butter, etc. All *
* donated items benefit families in our *



Upcoming Events Calendar

Jan 1st—Happy 2012

Jan 10th—Town Board Meeting 7:00PM

Jan 12th—Planning Board Meeting 7:30PM

BARKER FREE LIBRARY HOURS:

Monday 10AM—5PM

Tuesday 10AM—8PM

Wednesday Closed

Thursday 10AM—8PM

Friday 10AM—5PM

Saturday 10AM—1PM

