



# Town of Somerset

Volume 37, Issue 3

Holiday 2022

## From Your Town Clerk

Dear Residents,

I would like to start by thanking everyone who donated peanut butter and jelly for Assemblyman Norris' drive. We filled a barrel! I would also like to acknowledge the successful return of the Corn Fest to the Village of Barker. They worked hard to organize it and their hard work paid off! They are currently planning the 2022 Light Up Barker Decorating Contest. Check the Light Up Barker FaceBook page for details.



We have a committee that is continuing to plan the Town's Bicentennial for next year. The first event that we hope to hold will be a dinner in February, which is the month that the Town actually turns 200 years old. As soon as plans are made we will post notices on our website. If you have not done so, please sign up on our website to receive notifications when news gets posted. If you need assistance with this, please feel free to contact my office.

I hope everyone has the best holiday season, and that you get to enjoy time with your families.

**Tracy L. Carmer, RMC**



### BARKER PUBLIC LIBRARY HOURS

Monday 10AM—5PM

Tuesday 10AM—5PM

Wednesday 10AM—5PM

Thursday 10AM—5PM

Friday 10AM—5PM

Saturday 10AM—Noon

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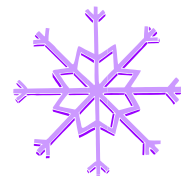
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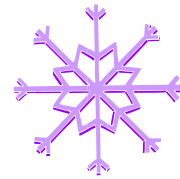
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## A Word From Your Supervisor

Jeffrey M. Dewart - 716-795-3575, ext. 3 jeffdewart@gmail.com

Hello Somerset,



I hope everyone is enjoying this late summer weather we are having as fall and winter are just around the corner. I would like to remind everyone that the Niagara Community Action Program, Inc. is there to help. They have many different programs from weatherization programs to heating specialists to food pantries and many more programs. Their phone number is 716-434-4679.

The tower going up across from Crosby's, as you can see, has started. The County was hoping to have it up and running this fall but, like everything else, they are having a hard time getting equipment in. They are hoping by spring that it will be up and running.

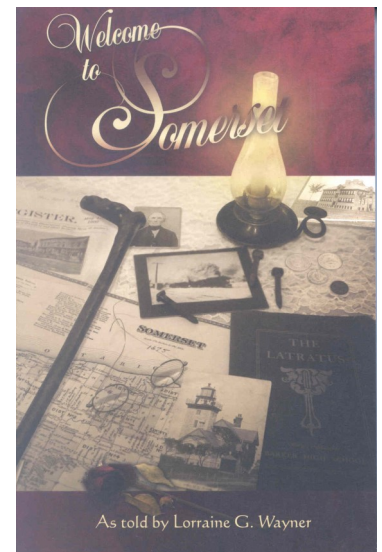
I have had a lot of people asking when the smoke stack is coming down at the former power plant. Well, at this point, I am being told not until next year. So when I find out I will let you know.

Our 200 year committee is rolling right along. We are planning a kick off banquet this coming February. More to follow on the banquet.

I would like to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas!

Jeff Dewart

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.



### Tax Collection Hours

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

January—Monday - Thursday 9:00 AM— 4:00 PM  
(Closed January 16th)

February and March—Thursdays only—9:00 AM—4:00PM



Due to legislation being enacted on January 1, 2023, our electronic recycling program will have some changes to the days and/or hours of collection. Watch our website for updates.



## THE YORKER HOUSE

There seems to be quite a bit of talk about the Yorker House and who is going to maintain and pay for repairs. This article is not meant to make any decisions on who is responsible for the building, it is only meant to give the history of it.

What is the Yorker House? Where did the name come from? These are questions people ask.

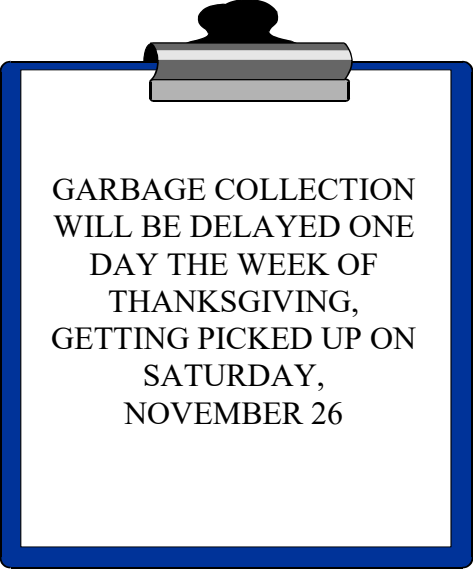
The story starts with a pioneer, Humphrey Sharpsteen, who came to Niagara County in 1815. He was a hard working man. He bought property on what is now Haight Road, down to where the railroad tracks were later built in the Village. The tract of land was on the west side of Quaker Road.

In 1816 Humphrey returned to Cayuga County and married Permelia Pease and they returned to the log cabin which Humphrey had built. The log cabin stood a little south of where the 1911 Barker High School was later built. They had nine children and a larger farm house was built just south of their log cabin. The two houses are listed on the 1875 census, the log cabin and another built by one of the sons, William, when he married in 1865. William's house is the present Yorker house. So how did it become the Yorker House?

In 1937 land was needed to build the centralized school. The school district purchased the remaining Sharpsteen property, which included the William Sharpsteen house. There was a junior group of the NYS Historical Association known as Yorkers. Barker Central School teachers Edna Jerome and Charles Steele had students that were very interested in history. The ambitious students, along with their advisors formed a chapter of the Yorker Club in 1962. They named it the "Barker Historians".

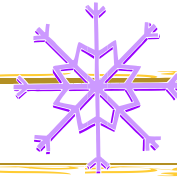
The Barker Historians main project began in 1963 when the Board of Education gave them permission to restore the hundred year old house. Through this project and its completion in 1967, the house became known as the Yorker House. The name hasn't changed and continues after all these years. Much work has been done over the years but with the economic situation who knows what will happen to this wonderful piece of our history.

Peter J. Devereaux



GARBAGE COLLECTION  
WILL BE DELAYED ONE  
DAY THE WEEK OF  
THANKSGIVING,  
GETTING PICKED UP ON  
SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 26





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## *From the desk of Robin Jansen, Councilwoman*

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Elections and approval of the town budget have recently concluded and it reminds me of what my role on the Somerset Town Board entails. My 3 main jobs as your elected town official are to support the health, safety and welfare of all town residents through legislative actions, to make sure that town employees work in a safe environment, and to be fiscally (judiciously) responsible with your town property taxes.

Budgeting is never easy and New York State requirements make it even harder. The property tax levy **growth** will be capped at **2%** for 2022 for local governments that operate on a calendar-based fiscal year. That 2% is distributed across all departments and categories of expenses from road repair to office supplies and wages. Additionally, the Town Highway budget can only receive funds from the State, County and sales taxes unless there is a special district for the Highway Department. The State also requires that the municipality maintain a certain percentage of money in the fund balance. All this requires a sharp pencil. Believe me it's never easy for us as your elected officials to increase your property taxes.

As a board member, as well as a tax payer, I keep at the forefront of my mind what and how we spend your money. Every time a light switch is turned on, or a lawn mower is fueled, your taxes pay for it. Every board member reviews each line item of the proposed budget and decides if the request is reasonable prior to the budget work session and the public hearing on the budget and vote to approve. We also review all invoices that are to be paid each month. We review that the check for payment matches the invoice amount, that the abstract matches the invoice and that the description of the expense is reasonable and should be paid.

My husband and I hope each of you have a wonderful holiday season and a safe winter.

Robin Jansen

Deputy Supervisor



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## **BARKER FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS**

- Horses & Hoses 2023 Calendars are available at the fire hall on Thursday evenings between 6:30 and 8pm for \$10
- Be sure to have your chimney cleaned and inspected every year
- Keep fire hydrants clear of snow
- Fund Drive letters should be arriving in the mail shortly; any financial assistance is greatly appreciated
- Be sure to check the batteries in your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors
- Smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and reflective house number signs make great Christmas gifts; reflective house number order forms are available at the town hall
- Kids Christmas Party will be held at the fire hall on Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> between 10am – 12noon to include games, magic entertainment, candy and of course, a visit from Santa

As always we are looking for new members. Stop by any Thursday evening between 6:30 and 8pm for an application or for more information. Training and equipment are free.

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## Barker Lions: We Serve

Since 1947, Barker Lions have been helping our community. As Helen Keller's Knights of the Blind, we help provide glasses for those in our community who cannot afford them. That has expanded to hearing aids and to a Loan Closet with a myriad of hospital beds, wheelchairs, walkers and other medical supplies. These are available free of charge to any community member.



Thank you to all who visited our Trunk and Treat Event. We had some wonderful submissions to our coloring contest. Lions Choice winners were Quinn and Semira, Most Creative were Alexandra and Tessa, Most Traditional were Gabriella and Bryce, Scariest were Ayla and Wren, and Funniest were Aine and Tessa.

This year's Lions Peace Poster contest theme was Lead with Compassion. The club had many wonderful entries. William Jaques drawing was selected to go onto the District Contest.

Although chicken barbecue season is winding down, our fundraising efforts continue. 100% of the funds we raise go to help with eyeglasses, hearing aids and other personal needs in Barker. In addition, we support the International Lions fight against hunger by contributing to the food pantry. We have two fundraisers. One is our annual mailer which has been sent to each residence. Please send your donations to PO BOX 123, Barker, NY 14012. Our second fundraiser is based on the evening lottery numbers. Tickets are \$5 each and prizes will be awarded throughout February with the largest prize on Valentine's Day.

To keep informed about the Barker Lions' activities, friend us on Facebook or email us so we can add you to our e-newsletter list. When we have chicken barbecues, we send an e-newsletter to all who sign up.

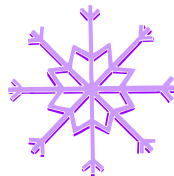
Our monthly dinner meetings take place on the first Wednesday of each month September – June at the Lions building. We invite speakers to make various presentations and organize our projects. If you would like to be involved or need assistance, contact the club at [Roar@BarkerLions.org](mailto:Roar@BarkerLions.org) or call 716-778-7001.



Great news from the Barker Public Library!!! The library was awarded the Children's Book Project Disaster Relief Grant from the Pilcrow Foundation in the amount of \$800.00. There are a limited number of these grants offered to libraries. The awarded funds were used to purchase 49 all new, hardcover children's picture and chapter books. In addition to the Pilcrow grant books, we received 37 non-fiction, science and board books from foundation donors Bill Strawbridge & Meg Wallhagen and Hal Berenson & Laura Ackerman.

The Pilcrow Foundation was founded in 2013 to continue the work of the Libri Foundation to provide new, quality, hardcover children's book to rural public libraries across the US. "Literacy is the greatest gift we can give our children; the library is the place to start" - Pilcrow Foundation.

This award enables the library to continue to rebuild our children's book collection. The new building is coming along and it is an exciting time for the Barker Public Library. Visit the library today and check out our awesome collection of new books.



## Water/Sewer Department News

Jonathan Dewart, Water/Sewer/Grounds Superintendent 716-795-9919

When you receive your next water/sewer bill you will notice that it is a little higher. With the cost of everything on the rise, Niagara County had to increase their water rates to us. A typical resident who gets a minimum bill will see it increase from \$15.80 to \$17.50 for water, and from \$18.00 to \$22.00 for sewer. This rate change became effective October 1, 2022.

A couple of reminders from our department: With the winter weather upon us, it is important to remember to keep your fire hydrants and vent pipes clear of snow.

With many homes selling within our town, it is good to remind our neighbors that only proper materials are to be flushed and washed down the drains into the sewer. To save on the cost of repairs and to ensure the proper function of your sewer utility, items such as diapers, rags (wipes) toys (plastic materials), and excessive grease are examples of materials that should not be disposed of in the sewer system.

Have a safe and blessed holiday!



FOR RELEASE: November 4, 2022

CONTACT: Andrew Dugan | (518) 852-1282

Unfortunately, this has been a tumultuous year. Albany politicians have been trying to convince New Yorkers not to believe their own eyes: their TV ads, thought pieces, and press statements have all tried to trick you into believing that they've got crime and inflation under control.

New Yorkers know better. They know they are less safe today than they were just a few years ago. They know their hard-earned paycheck is worth less every passing day. They know this because they see it in their local communities and their wallets.

This year in New York State, we have witnessed brave police officers murdered and assaulted; senior citizens, Asian-Americans, and other communities targeted and attacked in broad daylight.

Over the summer, we have also felt the pain of paying close to \$4.50/average for a gallon of gas in New York; utility bills tripling for some customers; and options in the grocery store down while the cost goes up for milk and eggs, all thanks to "supply-chain" issues and inflation.

Unfortunately, this year's state budget missed the mark in addressing the needs of New Yorkers.

Number One: We needed to fully repeal cashless bail. The latest "tweaks" here and "fixes" by Albany this past year did not accomplish anything of note, and our communities aren't any safer.

We still need to go back to the drawing board on bail and public safety. To get it right, we need everyone at the table, including law enforcement, and we need to provide our judges with the clear power to keep dangerous criminals off our streets – a power they still do not have. Also, we should've made Kendra's Law permanent and fully fixed New York's discovery laws. Sadly, Albany is still sending the message with this most recent budget that our prosecutors, our cops, and our entire judicial system will continue to be handcuffed.

Number Two: We should have fully suspended the entire state gas tax – not partial or rebate gimmicks. We could've also freed our state energy sector from the constraints of senseless overregulation instead of adding more senseless red tape.

Finally, when it comes to the CLCPA, the Climate Leadership and Community Protections Act, it is clear - my colleague across the aisle, and their proposed plans, are out of touch with middle-class New Yorkers and will be a significant financial burden to our state's residents. These plans will only result in higher utility costs and a less reliable grid. To lower energy costs, we must cut taxes and regulations.

Two key government responsibilities are to ensure the safety of its people and be good stewards of their tax dollars. Voters elect officials to pursue laws and policies that protect our residents, law-abiding taxpayers, and families. Right now, Albany is not doing that.

New York leaders can and must aggressively reverse course, restore public safety, and fix our state economy. We can't use \$220 billion taxpayer dollars to spend our way out of this problem. As we head into the holiday season, I wish you and your families a blessed holiday season, and remember, I will continue to be a voice for you in Albany.

**Volume 37, Issue 3  
Holiday 2022**

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- ◇ December 10 - Kids Christmas Party at the Barker Fire Hall - 10am - noon
- ◇ December 10- Faith United Methodist Church - Christmas Community Celebration - Barker Community Band, Cookie Walk, Sub Sale - 6 pm
- ◇ December 11 - Victorian Christmas in the Country - Babcock House Museum - 1pm - 4pm
- ◇ December 13- Food Truck at Faith United Methodist Church - 11am
- ◇ December 16- Christmas Cantata at Faith United Methodist Church - 7 pm
- ◇ December 17 - Light Up Barker
- ◇ December 24- Christmas Eve Service Faith United Methodist Church - 8 pm
- ◇ February 11 - Bicentennial Kickoff Dinner - details TBA
- ◇ March 16 - Windsong Mobile Mammography at Faith United Methodist Church 9am - 3pm, Call 716.929.9494