

TOM NEVERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Spring 2009 Newsletter

Important Dates ...

Our Annual Cocktail Party
Saturday, July 25th



Our Annual Meeting
Saturday, August 1st



The Boston Pops Concert
Saturday, August 8th



The Opera House Cup
Sat. & Sun. August 16th



Demolition Derby
Sat. & Sun. August 16th

Your 2009 Dues Invoice ...

If an invoice is enclosed, we still haven't received your 2009 Dues Payment.

Please be a pal and send us your dues check ASAP.

Solving our latest problem:

Our shared mission in the Tom Nevers Civic Association is to not only protect...but also to enhance...the quality-of-life and property-values in our great neighborhood. To that end, we've spearheaded a number of important initiatives over the past few years.

You'll no doubt recall our successful fight to keep the funding for the Surfside waste-water treatment plant from unfairly adding to our property tax burden. And you'll hopefully remember last year's massive community-wide effort to develop a comprehensive Tom Nevers Area Plan...a plan that protects our current 3-acre zoning...a plan that addresses the problem of potentially disruptive small commercial businesses and mass employee housing in our strictly residential community...a plan that maps out actions leading to the addition of a bike path and NRTA bus service in our area...and much, much more. (Our Area

Plan has been approved by the Planning Board and volunteer Implementation Teams are now at work to make it all happen!)

Enough about history! This year, we're tackling an especially critical issue. An issue that can drastically affect both your personal health and our economic well-being. That issue is the soaring rate of Tick-borne diseases.

As previously reported, Nantucket Cottage Hospital documents that tick-borne diseases on Nantucket are up 250% in the past two-years alone. And as you'll see in our latest TNCA Member Survey Report...highlighted in this issue of your newsletter...that figure is significantly understated. There is no

escaping the fact that we have a major problem. A problem, which if left unchecked, will jeopardize both our health and the future of our tourism-based economy.

So what's to be done?

Responding to pressure from the TNCA and other Island organizations, the Selectmen have vowed to address

our tick-borne disease problem. And after a series of hearings in their role as the Board of Health, they have recently appointed a special committee to come up with recommendations on how best to deal with our growing tick-borne disease problem. These are the people we have to reach and persuade. Keeping the pressure on is very much in all our best interests...and will be a huge priority for the TNCA in the coming months.

In the meantime, please be extra vigilant in protecting

yourself and your family and guests from tick bites. Damminix tick tubes can help keep your immediate property largely tick free. But that doesn't protect you once you leave your property. So cover up as best you can. Check everyone for ticks daily. Keep a good magnifying glass, flash light and tweezers handy. Ticks are very tiny, but they're far too dangerous to ignore. Until our Town fathers face up to a more comprehensive solution, this is the best we can advise.

We also ask you to make your voice heard...at local meetings, in letters-to-the-editor, and in direct contact with Town officials. This is a problem we can and must solve. ❖

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Tick-Borne Disease Survey Results...

In December 2008, the Tom Nevers Civic Association conducted a survey among its members to gauge the impact of tick-borne diseases on their lives. By the January 31st 2009 cut off date, over 37% of all voting members had responded... providing a 95% confidence level in the survey's findings.

While not projectable to the Island as a whole—largely because Town residents and transients were not included—this survey does provide a good indication of the impact of tick-borne diseases on property-owners across Nantucket's many "countryside" areas. In addition, it provides valuable qualitative data...in the form of verbatim statements from many of the survey's respondents...indicating the severity of the tick-borne disease problem and the plea that something significant be done to solve it.

Highlights from the survey report appear below...and you can review the complete survey report on our website—www.tomnevers.org . ❖

Summary Findings...

Conclusion #1— The incidence of tick-borne diseases on Nantucket is far greater than the yearly statistics compiled by Nantucket Hospital would imply.

Finding 1... 6-out-of-10 households have been infected with a tick-borne disease.

When asked—"Have you or any members of your family...or any of your Nantucket guests or renters...ever had any of the following tick-borne diseases?"—survey respondents said—

- Lyme Disease.....61.3% said "Yes"
- Babesiosis.....17.2% said "Yes"
- Ehrlichiosis..... 8.6% said "Yes"

Finding 2... On average, 2.3 people per household have been infected.

When asked—"the total number in your group (family + guests + renters) who have contracted a tick-borne disease?" survey respondents said—

- Total number infected... 2.3 avg. per household*
- Number with Lyme disease... 1.8 avg. per household*
- Number with Babesiosis... 1.2 avg. per household*
- Number with Ehrlichiosis... 1.3 avg. per household*

* In Households that reported having had this tick-borne disease infection.

Finding 3... Local statistics miss nearly a third of those people infected with a tick-borne disease...because they were diagnosed and treated off-Island.

When asked—"where their tick-borne diseases were diagnosed and treated?"—survey respondents said—

- Percent diagnosed off-Island.....31.6%
- Percent treated off-Island..... 35.0%

Finding 4... The incidence of tick-borne disease infection is even higher than reported in the above data.

Our survey focused on the number of people infected with tick-borne disease ...and not the number of times they were infected. Based on the write-in comments from many respondents, we see that multiple infections over time are fairly common. In fact, reported multiple infections of Lyme disease ranged from 3 to as high as 6.

Another major factor suggests under-reporting. When asked—"How many people live in, or visit, your Nantucket property in a typical year?"—survey respondents said—

- Resident Family... 2.3 people on average (11% of all)
- Visiting Family... 6.4 people on average (29% of all)
- Guests..... 7.8 people on average (36% of all)
- Renters..... 5.2 people on average (24% of all)

With as many as 9-out-of-10 being non-resident short-term visitors, it is more than probable that a fair number of these people were indeed infected but never diagnosed. Based on the write-in comments from many respondents, we can see this concern expressed over-and-over again about some of their "guests" and/or "renters".

Conclusion #2— Tick-borne diseases contracted on Nantucket pose a far greater long-term health threat than is generally acknowledged.

Finding 5... Due to initial misdiagnosis, the percent of infected people with ongoing health problems is significant.

Percent reporting an initial misdiagnosis—

- Lyme Disease.....18.6%
- Babesiosis.....15.8%
- Ehrlichiosis.....30.0%

Percent reporting ongoing health problems—

- Lyme Disease.....10.8%
 - Babesiosis.....15.8%
 - Ehrlichiosis.....20.0%
-

Conclusion #3— The growing threat of contracting a tick-borne disease on Nantucket is having a serious negative impact on both the quality-of-life and future economic health of the Island.

Finding 6... More than 8-out-of-10 are now far more apprehensive about engaging in outdoor activities.

- 88.2% say they now worry more about outdoor activities like gardening, hiking, picnics, etc.
- 83.9% say they now warn their visitors to be more cautious about exposure to ticks.

Finding 7... More than 5-out-of-10 are now worry that unless something is done to solve the tick-borne disease problem, Nantucket will lose its appeal to visitors...and decrease their property values.

- 59.1% say “they worry that the problem, if left unchecked, will make Nantucket less attractive to their visiting family members, guests and/or renters.”
- 51.6% say “they worry that the problem, if left unchecked, will affect Nantucket property values.”

Conclusion #4— While growing numbers are taking major steps to reduce their personal tick exposure, most believe it will require an Island-wide initiative to counter the growing tick-borne disease problem.

Finding 8... About 3-out-of-10 plan to take steps to reduce the number of ticks on their properties—

- 29.0% say “they plan to increase preventive measures like fencing, Damminix, etc.”
- The vast majority believe that Nantucket’s tick-borne disease problem must be addressed on an Island-wide basis.



Some verbatim comments...

“My daughter has suffered ongoing health problems, including heart problems related to an undiagnosed case of Ehrlichiosis. She is currently under treatment of a Lyme disease specialist, after a misdiagnosis at Yale University.”

“I don’t want my grandchildren exposed to the potential of a serious illness from a tick-borne disease. If this problem is not addressed, it will cause me to recommend that my family discontinue coming to Nantucket.”

“We have had 3 cases of Lyme disease. One case was diagnosed at a very advanced state and resulted in rather extensive cardiovascular problems, as well as vulnerability to other viral infections.”

“More and more family and visitors have heard of the “Lyme disease epidemic” on Nantucket. People have become skeptical about taking walks anywhere but on the beach. We believe this is a problem that is doing to grow. We recently watched the movie “Jaws” again. Nantucket’s politicians remind us of the politicians depicted in Jaws, in that they refuse to accept the obvious data and act.”

“I almost died when my spleen ruptured as a result of Babesiosis complications...and would have where it not for the heroic efforts of the EMTs, Dr. Lepore and Nantucket Hospital. This can happen to anyone.”

“We check ourselves thoroughly for ticks every day. And several have been found on our grandchildren. Fortunately they were easily found before attachment....but the whole process brings fear to the children.”

“Misdiagnosed Lyme disease shortened my father’s life. The result was strokes, total deafness, blindness in one eye, neuropathy in extremities, eventual wheelchair confinement.”

“Two of us contracted Lyme disease and Babesiosis. One of us was diagnosed and treated successfully on-island. But the other was initially misdiagnosed off-island, delaying successful treatment significantly.”

“I worry that our family or guests may get infected but not understand that it is Lyme disease before it is too late for effective treatment.”

“I was misdiagnosed for Lyme disease in the 1980s, which led to the onset of early arthritis.”

“After their 3rd bout with Lyme disease, the couple who had rented our house for 3-weeks every summer for the past 14 years decided that they had finally had it with Nantucket. They’re now vacationing in the Pacific Northwest.”

“I have 2 friends in PA with chronic Lyme, which they may have contracted here (not sure). It’s a huge problem for

(Continued from page 3)

them. To date, 4 of our family members have contracted Lyme disease and I'm getting more and more concerned."

"Six years after my treatment for suspected Lyme disease, I still have some neurological issues. Our yard never has less than three deer in it, despite our efforts to make it less attractive. We don't fertilize any grasses. Our few shrubs are fenced off and only native plants are accessible as a food source. It doesn't matter. Our whole area is covered with droppings and is tick infested."

"We are surrounded by deer. I'm not a hunter, but I think that hunting and other methods to control the deer population should be expedited. The Board of Selectmen should be vigorously prodded to approach this problem with urgency from all arenas."

"Having to inspect your body every day for tiny bugs may be standard fare if you're visiting a third-world country—but we should expect far more from a world-class resort like Nantucket. Why do we settle for the health-risk and indignity of living with a deer tick infestation? Why are we letting the few block the obvious solution? We should get rid of the deer...or at the very least, reduce the number and move them to an enclosed compound on conservation land." ❖

Advice on Damminix Use...

Properly used in both spring and late summer, Damminix tick tubes can kill off up to 90% of the disease-carrying ticks in your yard and garden. Your spring application targets ticks during their nymphal stage: and your late summer application targets tick larvae as they hatch from their eggs. Application timing is important for greatest effectiveness.

Recently, we've heard from Dr. Sam Telford of Tufts University...the acknowledged expert on the life cycle of ticks in Nantucket's unique ecosystem. Here's what Dr. Telford recommends—

- In the spring, apply Damminix no later than the 3rd week in May. (If you miss that date, double-up on your late summer application.)
- For your late summer application, apply Damminix no later than the first week in August. (This gives the mice ample time to carry the Damminix-impregnated cotton into their nests prior to the September tick larvae hatch.) ❖

Need someone to install Damminix tubes for you?

James Cook of "Bartlett Tree Experts" tells us that his firm provides this service. For details, you can call Jim at—508-228-2338. Or you can email him at jcook@bartlett.com
❖

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Tom Nevers Civic Association
P.O. Box 2926
Nantucket, MA 02584

TNCA MEMBERSHIP STATEMENT

Statement Date: May 1, 2009
Due Date: May 31, 2009
Account #: 502

Please send us your dues check ASAP !!

We need extra \$\$ to help fund our Area Plan implementation efforts.
Many Thanks !!!

Description

- **ANNUAL DUES —**
Tom Nevers Civic Association
(January 1 –to– December 31, 2009) \$ 15.00

- **ANNUAL DUES —**
Nantucket Civic League (\$5.00)..... Included in your TNCA Dues

2009 Total — Please pay this amount \$ 15.00

The Tom Nevers Civic Association is your “official neighborhood organization”—giving voice to your concerns at the Local, Town, County and Statewide levels. With a volunteer board and volunteer officers, elected by you, our singular focus is in shaping the outcomes of key decisions that will directly affect the quality-of-life and property values in the Greater Tom Nevers Neighborhood. And in this we’re succeeding. With more than 525 members, our collective voice is being heard “loud and clear”. Your Membership Dues make all this possible !

The Tom Nevers Civic Association, Inc. is a non-profit organization under IRS Code: 501(c)(4).

Please cut here and remit this portion with your payment. Thank you!

TOM NEVERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION / 2009 Membership Renewal Form

- Enclosed is my check for \$15 for 2009 dues.
- Enclosed is my check for \$30 for 2009 and 2010 dues.
- I’ve also enclosed a special contribution of _____ to help TNCA expand its efforts.

Name(s) as you wish to be listed _____

Island Property location _____

Island Mailing Address _____ Tel. _____

Off-Island Address _____ Tel. _____

Current Email address _____

Preferred mailing address: _____ Off-Island _____ On-Island

**Please make your check payable to the “Tom Nevers Civic Association”
And return with this form to — Dual Macintyre / TNCA / P.O. Box 2926 / Nantucket, MA 02584**