

TOM NEVERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Winter 2012 Newsletter

2012 Events...

Mark your calendar!
Here are the dates for this
year's two biggest events—



Our Annual Cocktail Party

Date: Saturday July 28th

Time: 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Place: 26 Longwood Drive

Our Host: John Perone



Our Annual Meeting

Date: Saturday August 18th

Time: 9:30 – 11:00 AM

Place: Public Safety Facility
at 2 Fairgrounds Road



It's Dues Time!

- ◆ Is \$15 too much to ask?
Not only for you, but to
cover your entire family?
- ◆ Please use the enclosed
renewal envelope.
- ◆ And be sure to include your
current email address...
to receive all the latest news in
our TNCA Email Alerts.



Looking Ahead... To the Year Ahead...

We have a full plate of issues that we'll be working on...and/or keeping our eye on...during the year ahead. Here's a brief update on some of what's happening in our neighborhood... and where your TNCA officers and board members will be directing their efforts on all our behalf in 2012 —

■ TN Road Bike Lane—

This is our second year of trying to get this much-needed improvement approved. And thanks to Pam Bartlett's ongoing efforts, a proposal to fund the design and construction of a clearly-marked bike lane along the east side of Tom Nevers Road will be voted upon at our March 31st Town Meeting. While there is broad support for this concept, finding the money for it is the major problem. The Board of Selectmen is already supporting several big capital projects...including a possible wind turbine at the Madaket land fill, renovating the Town Building and old Police Station downtown, and building a bike path on Hummock Pond Road. This makes it problematic that they'll want to support another capital project. That's why it's so important that all our eligible voters vote "Yes" for Article 36 at the Town Meeting. (You'll find the full wording of Article 36 on page 3 of this newsletter.)

■ Sewer Funding—

Our members overwhelmingly opposed unfairly shifting a higher percentage of the Island's sewer costs onto those of us with septic systems...and organized to vote down all such proposals during last year's general election. But the losers vowed to try, try again. For now, it ap-

pears the whole issue is on hold. That's because the Board of Selectmen has decided to update the Island's "Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan" in view of new data...

which indicate that much of the nitrogen contamination in our harbors comes from airborne pollutants. If true, then the need to extend sewers to Monomoy and other harbor areas may disappear. In addition, Madaket harbor pollution might be handled by installing a limited sewer along the east shore of Hither Creek and piping the effluent

There's a lot
going on
in our
Neighborhood

!!!

to the Surfside plant. In the meantime, sewer rates will continue to climb in Town and in 'Sconset (by 33% this year) to pay for past debt incurred in building and upgrading the Surfside and 'Sconset plants. We'll be keeping a close watch on these developments!

■ Pizza-to-Go—

The new owners of a house on Chuck Hollow Road have sought permission to run a pizza delivery business out of a commercial-size kitchen that already exists in the garage of their property. Part of their plan may also include on-premise employee housing. Obviously, this has set off red flares with the boards of both TNCA and POATNE. Not only would this seriously impact the greatly-prized residential character of our neighborhood... it would also create a very dangerous precedent. Complicating matters is the fact that the Zoning Department has already signed-off on this owner's application...determining that it meets all the requirements for a

home-based business in a residential area. Our best hope... before having to launch our own legal actions...lies with the Health Department. We're told that before the garage can be used as a commercial pizza bakery, floor drains and grease traps would have to be installed. Costs for such a modification are likely to be high. As such, the new owner may choose to change their business plan. But if not...

■ Tick-borne Diseases—

To give us an accurate count of the Island's deer herd and to determine where they cluster in the greatest numbers, the Town has agreed to fund an aerial thermal-imaging survey of the island. This survey will also help determine the male and female percentages...key information in managing future herd-reduction efforts and in the possible placement of four-poster feeding stations. Meanwhile, the Tick-borne Disease Committee is pursuing plans to produce a Nantucket-focused short educational film on tick-borne diseases and their prevention. This spring, the TNCA board will consider the best ways to support this effort. In addition to financial sponsorship, possibilities include DVD/CD copies for our members to share with their houseguests and renters...and wider distribution on YouTube and via links in our own website—www.tomnevers.org.

■ Fire Prevention—

This continues to be a "hot topic", not only because of the always-present threat of fire, but because of the high cost of fire insurance here on the island. As a direct result of the questions we asked Town Officials at our last TNCA Annual Meeting, the Board of Selectmen requested a formal briefing by Nantucket Fire Chief, Mark McDougall. We attended that briefing...and you'll find a full report in a separate article on page 4 of this newsletter. The good news is that fire-fighting water availability is not a problem in Tom Nevers. Rather, it's the possible long delays before an alarm is sent in to the Nantucket Fire Department. Speed of response is the major factor in the severity of the fire loss...to both the burning house and neighboring properties. As a reminder--A leading cause of fires here and elsewhere on Nantucket is improper disposal of grill and fireplace embers. They can re-ignite as long as 36-hours after they appear to be extinguished. Ashes and embers should always be disposed of in metal containers far away from your house, deck, outbuildings, or foliage. Dousing them with water is strongly advised.

■ Paper Roads—

Going back to the early 1900s, developers laid-out and recorded a network of now long-forgotten roads and pathways in the Tom Nevers area and elsewhere across the Island. While many are overgrown or are maintained by neighboring property owners...these so-called "paper roads" have become Town property, largely as a result of generations of unpaid taxes. To clean-up this problem, the Town formed its "Roads & Rights of Way Committee". They're tasked with inventorying all our "paper roads" and "paper" beach-access pathways..."re-opening" those with importance to the community and the general public...and offering to abutters those tracts deemed no longer essential to the community at

large. This so-called "yard sale" program gives abutters the opportunity to affordably enlarge their properties, while also providing extra revenues to the Town.

Here in Tom Nevers, many of our "paper roads" are in Tom Nevers West...one of our most-historic areas, with its grid of roads and lots laid-out and registered in 1916 or before. And it's here, we're happy to report, that our neighbors in Tom Nevers West have been actively working together with the Town to determine which paper roads should be kept and which should be sold. Their efforts are a true model for how a program of this sort should work going forward...with the community, not just government officials, calling the shots. (See the separate article "Neighbors Working Together" on page 6, for more details.)

■ Town Budgets & Tax Rates—

Always an area to keep a tight watch on! Currently, the Town Finance Committee is working hard on the financials for the coming year. Early indications are that the Town's operating budget will be balanced...that's good news. But the Board of Selectmen will be sponsoring several debt-exclusion overrides to fund capital projects. If approved, that would mean higher taxes. The longer-term outlook for the Town's future operating budgets is more worrisome...employee wages and benefits are expected to continue to rise, perhaps forcing additional overrides. Without even more stringent fiscal management, this poses the likelihood of escalating property tax rates!

■ The Gun Club—

The Nantucket Hunting Association has now successfully secured most of the approvals needed to construct their new Club House and Shooting Range just east of the airport. And this past summer and fall, they held a number of fund raisers to add to their building fund. (You can view plans for both on the Nantucket Hunting Association website.) Importantly, the NHA has expressed a commitment to being a good neighbor to those Tom Nevers property-owners within ear-shot of the Shooting Range. Noise level standards have been established and will be monitored on an ongoing basis when and if the Shooting Range becomes operative.

■ Nantucket Civic League—

Several of our members have asked what value we derive from our Nantucket Civic League participation. (\$5 of your \$15 dues goes to them, making you both a TNCA and NCL Member). The bottom line is that by joining together with the 21 other neighborhood civic associations in this umbrella organization, we can share knowledge on how best to deal with our emerging local problems...and through unity, increase our clout with local officials and regional authorities. Recently, the NCL has renewed its focus on sponsoring forums. The one held in January brought together the leaders of several organizations to share ideas on how to make our downtown a more vibrant community center...year-round. More forums are planned for later in the year. That's good news, but the NCL still needs and wants more "new blood" in its leadership to further its mission. If interested, just let us know at... info@tomnevers.org.

Annual Meeting Warrents...

If you are a registered Nantucket voter, we encourage you to attend the 2012 Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, March 31st at the Nantucket High School.

You'll have the opportunity to vote on two Articles that will directly affect Tom Nevers...

ARTICLE 35—

Appropriation: Tom Nevers Bus Route ...

Sponsored by Carol Dunton, et al—
this Article reads as follows—

“To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds the sum of \$45,000 to be spent by Town Administration for the purpose of establishing a Tom Nevers Road NRTA bus route to run seasonally 8 times daily from mid-June through Labor Day annually.”

ARTICLE 36—

Appropriation: Tom Nevers Road Bike Lane ...

Sponsored by Pamela C. Bartlett, et al—
this Article reads as follows—

“To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds and/or borrow the funds pursuant to any applicable statutes, a sum of money to fund the cost for professional engineering and to build a Bike Lane (on the east side) of Tom Nevers Road from the Milestone Road Bike Path to Tom Nevers field and to take any other action related pursuant to this end. The estimated cost of the design and engineering and construction will be \$500,000. (A Bike Lane is a widened strip of roadway defined by a yellow line. It is a nationally recognized standard and is maintained by standard road maintenance.)”

Please Attend! Please Vote!!

“Looking Ahead” ... Continued from page 2

■ Big Parties—

At least once each summer, hoards of young and wish-they-were-still-young revelers from across the country converge upon an Island beach to drink and party...leaving in their wake trash and, shall we say, other wastes. And each year, the Nantucket police try to tamp down this problem, but with understandably limited success...faced as they are with the sheer number of partiers and their diversionary tactics to throw off the police as to the party's “secret” destination. How does this affect us? If as discussed, the police place limits on future parties in Surfside and Nobadeer, the crowds could well move east to Tom Nevers. We want to be ready... by having in place a comprehensive contingency plan, should it ever be needed.

■ Zoning Compliance—

We're still fighting an uphill battle to get a few property-owners to clean up...or at least screen from view...their very unsightly road fronts--which most certainly devalue the appearance of our neighborhood. To our reading, these property-owners are in violation of our zoning restrictions...but apparently not so, in the views of the authorities. We're keeping on it, but as of yet we have to confess that we've made very little progress. Perhaps it will take conscientious new owners to finally clean up the mess!

■ Preventing Break-ins—

They're occurring island-wide. So to make our neighborhood less inviting to would-be burglars, Liz Trillos has helped to establish the framework for a “neighborhood watch” alert system...using emails to quickly spread the word if there's an attempted or successful break-in in our area. You may wish to alert your caretaker to keep extra observant...and to possibly participate in the “neighborhood watch” alert system.

■ All of the above...and more!

As you can see, it'll be a busier than ever year. But aren't they all? ❖

Lawt Sargent – RIP

We're saddened to report the passing of our dear friend and past-president of the Tom Nevers Civic Association... Lawton G. Sargent. Lawt's family reports that he died peacefully on February 2nd in Connecticut...just a little over six months after the passing of his dear wife of 62 years...Auddie. Lawt's good cheer and devotion to all of us in Tom Nevers will be sorely missed.

Fire Protection in Tom Nevers...

When we heard the news that a house near Tom Nevers Field burned to the ground last February, we all began asking this question— What can we do to provide greater fire protection here in Tom Nevers?

To get answers, we directed this question to Town Officials at our TNCA Annual Meeting...which led to a formal presentation by Nantucket Fire Chief, Mark McDougall, to the Board of Selectmen.

But first, to set the record straight...it's important to know that the destroyed house was already considered a total loss even before the alarm was called into the Nantucket Fire Department. It was the middle of the night...in mid-winter...and the burning house and all the neighboring properties were unoccupied. And though the newspaper reported that the fire department had to shuttle water to the site from 'Sconset...this was by choice and not necessity. There were existing water sources in Tom Nevers, but they were not used, for the reasons you'll see below.

Here's what we learned at Fire Chief McDougall's presentation--

■ Why can't we extend the Milestone Road water mains into Tom Nevers?

The cost would be enormous...and well beyond our current means. We're 4-miles from the nearest connection point and it would cost \$3,000,000+ just to run one main to Tom Nevers Field. To then run lateral piping and hydrants into all our neighborhoods would multiply the costs tremendously.

■ Why is 'Sconset a far better water source for us than our own hydrant and Tom Nevers Pond?

Using 'Sconset is faster and more productive. To draw water from the Pond or from our well-fed hydrant, you need two fire trucks...with one used exclusively as a stationary pumper...while the second shuttles water back and forth to the fire. To keep the supply of water at the fire site uninterrupted, a third fire truck would be required.

In contrast, the municipal water systems in 'Sconset and at the end of the Airport Road have enough water pressure to fill the tanks in our fire trucks without auxiliary pumping. Thus, both fire trucks can be used to fight the fire with an uninterrupted water supply. Even if we had more well-fed hydrants in Tom Nevers, 'Sconset would still be the preferred filing site for the NFD.

■ What about insurance costs?

In many (but not all) homeowner's insurance policies, there's a surcharge if you're more than 1,000-feet from a hydrant or other approved water source. On Nantucket this "close-to-a-hydrant" penalty can be \$900 or more. Currently, there's no way around this, other than shopping around for a new insurance carrier.

■ What about a buried water tank close to your property?

To possibly receive an insurance company credit as an approved water source, a buried tank must have at least a 30,000-gallon capacity...i.e.-enough to fill three fire tanker trucks. But costs for land, installation, ongoing maintenance, etc. make this alternative unattractive. And remember that the NFD would still likely by-pass the tank in favor of the more productive 'Sconset municipal water system.

■ What about swimming pools?

They're a possible secondary water source. But to draw water from them, the Nantucket Fire Department needs advanced written approval from the property owner. In addition, the pool must have an in-place drafting hydrant that can accept fire truck hook-ups. If you have a pool, you might consider providing a permission letter to the Nantucket Fire Department...covering both your own property and that of your neighbors'. The NFD can provide you with information on what's required for the drafting hydrant.

So what's the best way to protect against fire loss?

Per Chief McDougall—"The speed with which the NFD can respond to a fire...is more important than the supply of water in the immediate area! That means a monitored alarm system is your best protection... because it gives us the earliest warning!"

This is especially true in country-side areas like Tom Nevers...or when no one is at home. Without a monitored system, the delay before an alarm is even called in to the Fire Department (usually by a neighbor or passer-by)...is so great that by the time the fire trucks arrive, the fire cannot be knocked-down. (Attention then shifts to neighboring houses.)

■ What does it cost for a monitored system?

There are at least 4 alarm companies servicing Nantucket. We contacted them all to get prices. Initial costs to install a basic system (to monitor fire, break-ins, flooding) start at about \$1,500. Add-ons for an expanded system with more sensors, wireless back-up, remote control, etc. can raise the costs to \$3,000 or more. But those decisions are up to you.

Beyond that, there are ongoing costs for round-the-clock "central station" monitoring...which average about \$300 per year. But your insurance company may give you a credit that will cover much of that cost.

The benefit of a monitored system? Safety and savings. The alarm reaches the Fire Department...or Police Department in the case of a break-in...almost immediately. And that can make all the difference in the amount of your loss. Further...if you're at home when a fire or break-in occurs... help is automatically on-the-way, quickly. And if you're not at home, you and your caretaker are also notified of the problem immediately.

Going back to that total loss fire—

It was made even more tragic, because the new owner had not yet purchased fire insurance. And even though the house was equipped with a fire alarm system, the new owner had not yet had it hooked-up to a "central station" for monitoring. That meant the Nantucket Fire Department was notified so late that the house became a total loss! ❖

“Bombs Away”

At times during the next few months, a team of helicopters and land vehicles will be criss-crossing the non-residential areas in the Greater Tom Nevers Neighborhood. Their mission—to locate and remove any remnant munitions from World War II...when almost the entire Southeast Quarter of the Island was taken over by the U.S. Navy and declared strictly off-limits to civilians.

Located 30-miles out to sea and close to the main shipping channels to Europe, Nantucket’s strategic importance was long recognized by the U.S. Defense Department. During WWI, German U-Boats preyed upon cargo ships just off our coastline. And in 1941, German submarines returned once again. Plus, there was ongoing concern that Germany might try to seize the Island for use as a base from which to launch bomber and submarine attacks against the mainland.

To protect against this, the Federal Government leased Nantucket’s tiny airport...replacing its two short grass-covered landing strips with a truly major facility. Then, under wartime leases with several property owners, the U.S. Navy secured and cordoned-off almost the entire Southeast Quarter, declaring it a military reservation.

At the eastern end of the compound, they built and manned the Loran Station...a new and then still secret navigational technology. Between there and the airport, they used our undeveloped oceanfront land to train Navy combat pilots. Bombing and machine-gun targets were erected in several locations...including a floating raft moored in Tom Nevers Pond.

Planes dispatched from Quonset Naval Air Station in Rhode Island would make bombing and machine-gun runs to Nantucket...encountering wind and weather conditions not unlike those expected along the English Channel. Many of our new young Navy pilots had come from the heartland and had never flown in thick fog and heavy coastal weather. The Southeast Quarter of Nantucket became their training ground for Europe.

Flying from Quonset in all kinds of weather...they’d patrol the coastline, practice their navigational and landing skills at Nantucket Airport...refuel and re-arm, usually with duds... then bomb and strafe beach and island targets in Tom Nevers before rearming again at the airport and heading back to Quonset.

Since that time, we’d hear stories about old WWII bombs being unearthed in Tom Nevers. Unsure if they were duds, the bomb squad would use demolition charges to destroy them. But now, for safety sake, the Army Corps

of Engineers has hired a firm to conduct a comprehensive aerial survey of the old WWII firing ranges. Their work will be concentrated in the area between the airport and the easternmost edge of Tom Nevers Field. As we learn more about their specific schedule and plans, we’ll publish it in our TNCA Email Alert System. (To be sure you’re on it, send us your email address at—info@tomnevers.org)

Note—

The old Navy Base that we now know as Tom Nevers Field didn’t exist until 1955, during the Cold War. Described as an “oceanographic research station”, it was in truth a top secret “listening” facility that tracked Soviet submarine movements across the Atlantic. Its amazingly long undersea hydrophone cable extended north from Tom Nevers to Nova Scotia, then northeast past Greenland and Iceland, then east to the Norwegian Sea. All but a handful of Navy officers and technical personnel were unaware of its true purpose. With its mission finally complete, the Tom Nevers Navy Base was officially decommissioned in June 1976. ❖

Babesiosis Alert...

When it comes to tick-borne diseases, the threat of Lyme disease seems to grab all the headlines. But a second disease, carried by the same deer ticks, can pack an even bigger (and certainly more deadly) wallop.

We’re talking about Babesiosis...and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has just issued an alert that this parasitic infection with malaria-like symptoms is now being passed along to the general population through blood transfusions. As such, it’s posing a growing threat to the U.S. blood supply.

Per the CDC, the problem is that growing numbers of blood donors “can be infected and not know it.” Though Babesiosis can cause fever, chills, organ failure, and death in some patients—especially those with fragile immune systems, such as newborns and the elderly—other carriers show little or no immediate symptoms at all...and currently, blood donors are not being routinely screened for this parasite.

The threat is serious enough that some experts say blood banks should start examining all donated blood under a microscope for signs of Babesiosis, no matter how slow or labor intensive that process may be. Babesiosis is a potential killer...not only for the one infected, but as we’re now seeing, for anyone who receives their blood. Yet another reason to give our full support to our Tick-borne Disease Committee’s important initiatives. ❖

For comprehensive information on Nantucket’s Tick-borne Disease Initiative... visit our website— www.tomnevers.org

Neighbors Working Together..

Tom Nevers West is perhaps the most vibrant area in our community. It boasts the greatest percentage of young families, the greatest percentage of children, and the greatest percentage of year-round residents. Of the more than 35% of TNW families making their permanent home here...nearly 70% of them are working families.

That vibrancy was certainly on display this past summer, when—in a series of coffees organized by Pam Bartlett with the assistance of Joan Hollander—more than 60 TNW property-owners got together to discuss their “paper roads” and share ideas on related neighborhood improvements.

Using maps provided by the Planning Department that identified all the “paper roads” in the area, the group concurred that certain roads and pathways abutting conservation land...and those leading to Milestone Road...should remain open for all to enjoy. They also identified a number of mid-tract side roads as unnecessary...along with tiny pieces of land abutting other lots. They suggested that these “paper roads” and unbuildable lots could be sold to abutters. Once the plan is more fully developed, the Planning Office plans to contact all TNW property-owners and abutters with more information on their options.

In the meantime, residents in Tom Nevers West have been rolling up their sleeves...and working with the various conservation groups...to provide greater access to public lands near the shoreline and improving access to Milestone Road. Working together, they’ve successfully brush cut old overgrown pathways to the Mellon property (2 miles), to the old airfield (1 mile) and to Milestone Road (3/4 miles). Long identified on maps in the Registry of Deeds, these pathways are now once again available to hikers and bikers.

Well done!

For Tons of Info on our Neighborhood
Remember to visit our Website—

www.tomnevers.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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