

# THE NORTH STONINGTON QUARTERLY

Winter 2015

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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Happy New Year! Hopefully the end of the year saw you through the holidays safely. Speaking of which, safety (public safety, that is) will continue to be a focus for the Board of Selectmen.

Excavation of the site where the new Emergency Services Building will be located should be underway by now, as bids were reviewed and award was made last November. Also, the long overdue Boombridge Road bridge project should be turning the corner. The construction Request For Proposal is expected to be issued this month or next, with bids due May to June 2015 and construction starting in July 2015. The new year should also see a completed Hewitt dam repair, as the bridge delivery was scheduled for mid-December.

A new year also brings consideration of a new budget. The town meeting municipal structure of North Stonington affords the opportunity for the public to monitor the budget process, up close and personal. Consider attending a Selectmen's meeting February through April to observe and discuss the development of the annual budget. If you would like more opportunity to participate in setting the direction of our town, consider joining a board or commission. We need your input and perspectives on the many important issues we face which directly impact our quality of life in North Stonington. Please contact the First Selectman's office about current openings.

SELECTMEN      860-535-2877 Ext.10      SELECTMEN@NORTHSTONINGTONCT.GOV

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## WINTER AT WHEELER LIBRARY

Winter at Wheeler Library includes concerts, programs on healthy eating and getting organized (both sponsored by the Friends), and more great books and movies for all ages and interests.

Cabin Fever returns with bluegrass on Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup>. On Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, Lottie Penta will present "How to: Paleo Living", offering an insight of how to prepare and live on the Paleo Diet. On January 21<sup>st</sup> at 7pm, Sandra Wheeler will help us get organized for the new year. The final Music on Main concert features a trombone quartet on Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at 3pm. Proceeds from this event benefit Wheeler Library.

The February calendar includes an event in celebration of Chikumbuso's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a concert on Saturday, the 21<sup>st</sup> at 7pm, featuring the Kevin Crandall Band. All this, and maybe a movie or two on the big screen, at your local library!

Our Annual Appeal is in full swing. Your gifts help us keep the doors open and the shelves filled. For more information on events and giving, go to [www.wheelerlibrary.org](http://www.wheelerlibrary.org).

AMY KENNEDY      860-535-0383



## **NORTH STONINGTON TAX COLLECTOR**

Please remember that the second half installments of your tax bills are due in January. The last day to pay, without interest being charged, is February 2, 2015. For your convenience, payments may be made at the Chelsea Groton Bank (North Stonington Branch) as long as Back Taxes are not owed. Payments may also be made in the Tax Office in Town Hall. Office hours for the Tax Collector will be 9:00 to 4:00, Monday through Friday. The best way to avoid the crowds is to pay by mailing. If you would like a receipt, please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Also, supplemental motor vehicle tax bills for vehicles purchased between October 2, 2013 and August 2014 are in the mail. If you purchased a new or used vehicle and transferred the same license plate from the old car to the new, credit for the overpayment on the old car is shown on the new tax bill. You must pay the second payment on the old motor vehicle to earn the credit. Please do not disregard the second half payment on the old vehicle.

AMY SNELL, TAX COLLECTOR    860-535-2877 EXT. 20

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## **PAWCATUCK NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER**

We hope you can join us for the Cabin Fever Festival/Chowder Cook-Off on Saturday, February 28th, from 12-5pm, at Olde Mistick Village (Exit 90 off I-95). There will be free family entertainment throughout the day on "The Green". All of our area's finest restaurants will be selling a 3-ounce taste of their favorite chowder. You can vote on the "People's Choice Awards" for your favorite chowder. ALL proceeds raised are for the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center Free Emergency Food Party.

This pantry is feeding four times the number of people (who go through an income-eligibility screening) than it did 10 years ago. The PNC serves North Stonington, Pawcatuck, Stonington, Old Mystic, Mystic and Westerly. Please support this dead-of-winter, fun event.

VICKI ANDERSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR    860-599-3285

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## **NORTH STONINGTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

The North Stonington Education Foundation will hold its annual Trivia Contest on February 6, 2015, at the Stonington VFW (near Stonington High School) beginning with a 6:00 p.m. social hour. The fee is \$20.00 per person for teams of six to eight people. Further information can be found by calling 860-235-6471 or emailing [nsedfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:nsedfoundation@gmail.com). The Trivia Contest is one of three major fundraisers that the Foundation holds each year.

The NSEF funds grants that benefit our students and community with innovative programs and educational opportunities not normally funded through traditional town and education budgets. To date, the Foundation has given out forty-nine grants totaling \$135,000.

In October, the NSEF held an extremely successful Celebration of Excellence Dinner and Dance Gala. At this event, Maurice Miner became the eleventh person inducted as a member of the Wheeler High School Distinguished Alumni. A plaque in his honor now hangs across from the office at Wheeler High School alongside the plaques of other inductees. We thank all the wonderful people who supported our dinner.

In other news, Lauren Swanson was elected as the Junior Class Representative to the NSEF Board of Directors. The next round of grant applications is due on March 15, 2015. More information can be found at [nsedfoundation.org](http://nsedfoundation.org).

BING BARTICK    860-389-0264    [BBesail@aol.com](mailto:BBesail@aol.com)

## NORTH STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

We received some excellent news from the Department of Homeland Security regarding a competitive grant that I wrote about in the last newsletter. North Stonington Public Schools was awarded a grant through the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. The grant request was for \$103,135.00, of which the state will reimburse the district about 42%. The state's share will be about \$40 thousand and district's share will be about \$60 thousand. As a result of the grant, security will be enhanced in all our buildings.

Security upgrades will include the following:

- Installation of a visitors' management system in the elementary and middle/high schools' main offices, as well as at Central Administration
- Upgrades to the interior and exterior video surveillance to all buildings
- Installation of a new electronic automatic key locking system which will utilize FOB keys at all buildings
- Upgraded key locks for all interior doors at the North Stonington Elementary School, and
- Upgrade to the intercom system at Wheeler Middle/High School to the interior and exterior of the building.

We hope to have all aspects of the projects completed during the course of the current school year.

I want to wish the North Stonington community a happy, safe and healthy New Year!

PETER NERO, SUPERINTENDENT

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## CONSERVATION COMMISSION



Don't forget to buy a 2015 North Stonington Community Calendar produced by your Conservation Commission. It's filled with beautiful pictures of our town on every page and is available at the Library, Town Hall and Goodies.

Finishing the Stewart Hill Preserve Trail has been a greater undertaking than anticipated. Due, in large part, to volunteer help in chain sawing, weed whacking, trail identification, clearing, and posting, we have made significant progress. Its completion will surely be ready by spring. The town's other open space trails await your hiking enjoyment: Billings Lake Preserve, Hangman Hill Preserve, and Assekonk Borderlands Trail. Look for the trail map sign located at each of these sites.

Recommendations made in the 2013 Plan of Conservation & Recreation Lands (go to the Conservation Commission page of the town website for the link) are slowly but deliberately being acted upon within the monthly work of our commission. Letters to land owners of property the town would like to have preserved are being sent and contact with State DEEP for possible land acquisition has been initiated.

An alternate position is open on our commission. If you have an interest in conservation and might consider working on behalf of the town in that capacity, please contact Bill Ricker ([williamricker@comcast.net](mailto:williamricker@comcast.net)). We meet monthly on the 4th Thursday @ 6:00pm in the Town Hall conference room.

BILL RICKER, CHAIRMAN

## **NORTH STONINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Our first trimester ended on November 19<sup>th</sup> and Parent/Teacher conferences were held on December 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to all of the families that attended the conferences and support their children at home. It does make a difference!

Winter brings months of exciting learning and many events to share at North Stonington Elementary School. During this busy time, we encourage daily the development of reading with our students. Holidays and the cold months ahead are special times to encourage the love of reading. It will make such a difference when you cuddle up to read a book, no matter what age. It is also a great way to get your child “settled for a long winter's nap,” too!

On Feb. 26, NSES will be holding its third Annual Family Science Night with the theme, “Mixing It Up with Chemistry” from 6 – 7:30pm. Please join us!

I would like to take a moment to thank the community for supporting our school. If it weren't for the wonderful parents and guardians, our many volunteers, as well as the NSPTO, we would not have our students achieving at such great levels. We wish each and every North Stonington family peace, health, happiness, and the very best in 2015!

VERONICA WILKISON, PRINCIPAL

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## **NORTH STONINGTON PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

The NSPTO has already had a busy start to the school year and it looks like it will be continuing in the upcoming months. We had a very successful Fall Festival. This would not have been possible without the numerous sponsors, vendors, and volunteers. A big shout out also goes to the Wheeler Library for allowing our Cow Chip Bingo to take place on their yard .... a true community partner.

Be on the look-out for information regarding our new before/after-school program after many successful half day programs. Our annual Basket Raffle will take place at the Elementary School on Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 6 pm. If your family would like to donate a basket, please contact us. Our PTO meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at the Elementary School Library at 6 pm. We would love to see some new faces!

EMILY LEWIS, NSPTO PRESIDENT

Emily@NorthstoningtonPto.com

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## **THIS WINTER ON HEWITT FARM**

Once again it's time for sledding, horseback riding and exercising your dog in the snow - or simply "taking to the trail" on a crisp winter day. Print the Hewitt Farm Trail Map from [www.northstoningtonct.gov](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov) or pick one up at a trailhead.

Stop by to see the Hewitt Dam as it's being rebuilt. The pond has been “dewatered”, some stonework has been repaired or replaced, but there is still considerable work to be done. We hope to see the new bridge in place before snow impedes the project. The new fishing platform that is already built allows us to dream of summer fun. If construction prevents crossing the dam, take the River Trail to cross below the dam - or just enter the farm from Ryder Road.



For those interested in signing up for a 2015 Hewitt Farm Community Garden plot at the beginning of February, please contact Mary Ann Ricker ([marykicker@comcast.net](mailto:marykicker@comcast.net)). For all other information about happenings at the farm, don't hesitate to call Nita Kincaid (860-535-1416) or Dick Cooper (860-535-0528).

## **PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

We are plugging away at the revisions to the Zoning Regulations and will retain Juliet (Leeming) Hodge to finish the revision of the Zoning regulations, with the help of consultant Don Poland. The revisions are almost complete, and we hope to have publicized a draft for review in December. The public hearings will begin in January if all goes well. We are excited about changes, which should facilitate quality new development (investment) in town and hope to see some of you at the public hearings.

The commission unanimously approved the new EMS facility on Rocky Hollow Road with some suggestions for aesthetic improvements and look forward to its construction. Another plan being reviewed involves a new warehouse and distribution facility on a portion of the former Randall's Ordinary site. The company distributes organic food products produced in Italy. Although not part of the current application, the owners of the company have spoken of future plans to restore the former inn and restaurant – which we certainly hope will become a reality.

We look forward to working with the new Planning and Zoning Official as we move into the New Year! We meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 7pm in the Town Hall.

LOU STEINBRECHER, CHAIRMAN

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## **EMERGENCY SERVICES BUILDING COMMITTEE**

Many important strides have been made on the construction of the new building since our last report. We are proud to say that progress will be seen physically, with our eyes now, and not just on paper. The committee has selected a contractor to perform the excavation of the building site, which will require over 50,000 cubic yards of material be removed from the site to prepare it for construction. The contract award was based on a bid format with the lowest qualified bidder being selected. The firm of Suchocki and Sons was chosen and hoped to begin work by early December.

The floor plans for the interior of the building are in their final stages of completion and the committee is nearing the point of beginning an RFP (Request for Proposal) to go out for construction of the actual building. This process should take place in January and, with any luck, the construction of the new building will begin April of 2015. As always, all residents are urged to attend our meetings as your input would be greatly appreciated. Meetings are held every Monday at 7pm at the Firehouse.

MARK PERKINS JR., CHAIRMAN

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## **NORTH STONINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

This fall, we honored our founder, historian, environmentalist, writer & editor, the late Anna N. Coit, at a memorial service held at a very packed Wheeler Library.

The society is restoring the 1857 A.H. Gale Square piano, considered a very special instrument. We hope to have a series of Sunday concerts. Please consider assisting in this venture with your donation. For a \$35 donation we will give you a black “key” that will admit you to one concert. A \$60 donation comes with a white “key” and two concert invitations.

A beautiful book of photographs and paintings by F. Stewart Greene will be available very soon.

Don't forget to look for notices of joint programs with the Wheeler Library. This is a good time for you to become a member of the NSHS, P O Box 134, North Stonington. You may call Gladys Chase at 860-599-3608 with any questions..

## HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

The town of North Stonington Highway Garage will be continuing tree trimming on various roads in town. As we look towards the winter, residents are urged to make sure that the roadside areas of their property are kept as clear as possible and that no snow is pushed into the travel portion of any roadway, to avoid plowing issues.

Residential winter sand can be picked up at the town garage and is located in a clearly marked bin at the front of the highway garage

Transfer Station hours of operation are Wednesday 12:15 PM to 3:45 PM, Thursday 8:15 AM to 3:45 PM, Friday 12:15 PM to 3:45 PM and Saturday 8:15 AM to 3:45 PM. The transfer station phone number is 860-535-1048.

The Highway Garage hours are 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Contact the Highway Garage at 860-535-0924, Fax 860-535-8435, email: [tw.nstonington@snet.net](mailto:tw.nstonington@snet.net).

All road emergency or accidents can be reported via 911 system, 24 hours a day.

STEPHEN HOLLIDAY, HIGHWAY FOREMAN.

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## NORTH STONINGTON CITIZENS LAND ALLIANCE

Since 1987, it has been our privilege to be advocates for North Stonington's forests, streams, and fields of grasses and stone: we write, we talk, we meet, we work and enjoy; we are here to celebrate the town's unassuming and beautiful, natural self.

We are environmentalists, yes; and we also embrace North Stonington's great history, its scholarship efforts, its farming culture, its town meeting form of government, and its search for good businesses. There is most often more than one thing, more than one reason that most of us choose to live here. (And want to stay and stay and stay!)

The Land Alliance obtained its 501(c)(3) charitable organization status way back in 1987. We continue to be, by choice, an all-volunteer land conservation group for one town only, and that is North Stonington. We recently received a Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association 25-year award for monitoring the town's lakes and ponds. We quietly work behind the scenes with upkeep of our preserved 145 acres, all open for the public. We study and encourage fresh conservation possibilities of all kinds. Thoughts and ideas? Give us a call. And decide to join us, [www.nslandalliance.org](http://www.nslandalliance.org).



MADELINE JEFFREY, PRESIDENT 860-599-5517 [landallianceinc@gmail.com](mailto:landallianceinc@gmail.com)

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### HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL FROM THE NORTH STONINGTON QUARTERLY EDITORS!

As we enter 2015, we want to thank our contributors for providing such good information, our readers for giving us survey feedback that will help improve NSQ & the students at the Wheeler High School print shop for printing the Quarterly.

We welcome your questions or suggestions ([quarterly@informedcitizensofns.com](mailto:quarterly@informedcitizensofns.com)).

## WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL

Happy New Year to all of our Wheeler families. As we start 2015, 8<sup>th</sup> graders and high school students are two weeks away from their midterm exams!

Wheeler has many exciting events happening. Our Farm and Garden initiative is well underway. Our greenhouse is close to fully operational, and we are composting and planting as we speak. Club members have already toured a tree farm and are participating in presentations on a variety of topics.

In December, all of our high school students participated in the Save A Life Tour, a state, hands-on program about the dangers of distracted driving.

Thanks to our PTO, all of our students will be participating in a character-building assembly, Quest for Respect. This program is specifically geared at teenagers, highlighting the importance of making positive choices and respecting one's self. All these initiatives are a part of our preventative plan to keep Wheeler students safe and healthy.

Our winter sports are in full swing. Our boys and girls basketball and cheer programs are well into their schedules, and there are many games to catch between the high school and the middle school levels. Please come cheer on our Wheeler Lions!

KRISTEN ST. GERMAIN, PRINCIPAL

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## NORTH STONINGTON GARDEN CLUB

**TIPS FOR THE WINTER GARDEN** Finally the leaves are raked, spring bulbs are planted, perennials are cut back, and all the decaying vegetation in the garden has been added to the compost pile. We can now take a well-earned rest before we have to gear up for the spring season, right? Well, you may want to consider doing a few simple things now to protect your special plants during the winter, so they will not only survive but thrive next year.

Freezing and thawing during the winter can cause perennials to heave up out of the ground, damaging tender roots, even killing some plants. Once the ground is thoroughly frozen, put down several inches of mulch and cover with cut Christmas tree boughs, to keep the ground frozen. Whole Oak leaves are less likely than whole Maple leaves to become matted and mushy, causing crowns to rot. Maple leaves should be well shredded before using as a winter mulch.

Snow may be nature's magic mulch, but ice and heavy snow can alter the shape of a shrub, split or break branches, leading to stress or even death of the plant. Gentle shaking or brushing upwards with a broom will reduce the weight of new dry snow, but if the snow is heavy with ice, it is better to support hanging branches with thick wooden stakes or just wait until the ice melts before gently brushing off the snow to avoid breaking tender frozen shoots. To protect roses or any tender shrubs, burlap tied to several steel stakes can be used as a windbreak.

If you're interested in learning more about gardening, consider joining the North Stonington Garden Club. For more information, visit our website ([nsgardenclub.org](http://nsgardenclub.org)) or contact Membership Chairman, Nita Kincaid (860-535-1416).



## **BOARD OF FINANCE**

As we approach the end of the calendar year, the Board of Finance is reviewing the draft audit for the previous fiscal year (2013-2014). Preliminary review of the draft illustrates that the Town has done well in implementing last year's adopted budget and continues to maintain the Town of North Stonington in sound fiscal standing.

January is a time when planning for the next fiscal year (2015-2016) begins. It is initiated by requesting that the various departments and commissions input their individual budgets. By March, the Board of Finance is in full swing vetting these inputs and integrating the totals with estimates on revenues in order to present a proposed budget to the Town by late spring.

It is also important to mention that the current adopted budget (2014-2015) is closely monitored on a monthly basis. Facilitating transfers and appropriations as necessary to address unsuspected circumstances or changes in priorities stays ongoing. It is worthy to note that the budget is based on estimates and may be amended based on unforeseen variables.

The Board of Finance coordinates closely with the Board of Selectman and Board of Education to assure the optimal operation of the Town within available resources, while keeping a perspective toward the future and the potential opportunities that can benefit the Town of North Stonington.

All taxpayers are welcome to attend the public Board of Finance meetings, normally held at the New Town Hall. The schedule of meetings is available on the Town of North Stonington's website at [northstoningtonct.gov](http://northstoningtonct.gov).

DANIEL SPRING      CHAIRMAN

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## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

We received approximately 15 applications for the part-time Economic Development Coordinator and conducted interviews in mid-December. The Commission is looking forward to having an ED specialist on board so that we may get back to the difficult work of implementing the 2012 Economic Development Action Plan. That work includes updating the website and developing a business communication strategy that has elements of business retention/visitation built in.



According to several recent economic forecast presentations given by economists at local seminars and conferences, CT's economy is improving. Household debt levels are improving and lower energy costs are helping to boost consumer confidence. The strongest growing industries are Construction, Leisure and Hospitality, and Education and Health Services. New housing trends are moving away from single-family homes to a rise in the construction and demand for multi-family or rental housing. With the economic outlook improving, and a new set of Zoning Regulations in the works, we look forward to the possibility of renewed investment in North Stonington. To that end, we are pleased to support the proposed warehouse distribution facility on a portion of the Randall's Ordinary Site off Route 2, and

hope that the new regulations will facilitate the revitalization of other formerly vibrant sites in the near future. Meetings are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at 6pm at the Town Hall.

BRETT MASTROIANNI, CHAIRMAN

## ANIMAL CONTROL

North Stonington Animal Control has facilities to care for dogs and does not shelter any other animals. The shelter is located at the town Transfer Station, 215 Wintechog Hill Rd.

All dogs and cats should be up to date with the rabies vaccine and licensed by the town with the Town Clerk. If you have lost your dog, it can be returned to you quickly from the information on the town license tag. If your dog is unlicensed and is lost, please contact us as soon as possible so we may begin to look for it and network with the other local Animal Controls. If you find a stray dog, please contact us immediately so we may try to locate an owner. Residents play a critical role in locating the owners of stray dogs. Please feel free to check with your neighbors as well. Frequently dog don't run too far from home. Also, contact us if there is a dog at our facility that you are interested in adopting, so an appointment can be made for a supervised visit to ensure compatibility.

Please remember as we approach winter with inclement weather and dropping temperatures, if you are cold, they are cold! Please bring your pets inside.

TOM ABATE, ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER      860-287-2197

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## NORTH STONINGTON VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, INC

During the months of September and October 2014, your volunteers at the North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company (NSVFC) responded to a total of 50 emergency calls for "help." Of these calls: 3 were structure fires; 12 were motor vehicle accidents involving personal injuries; 4 were incidents involving hazardous materials; 15 were fire/smoke alarms; one was a medical assist; 3 were brush fires; 11 were service calls; and one was a technical rescue operation involving Life Star, of a badly injured fall victim on Lantern Hill.

An average of 14 volunteers responded to these calls, of which 19 calls occurred Monday through Friday (0700-1600 hours) and 31 calls occurred during the evening, night and weekend timeframes. The volunteer members of NSVFC expended a total of 637 man-hours donated to the residents and Town of North Stonington, while responding to these 50 emergency calls.

Volunteers at NSVFC also conducted a total of 6 training drills during this timeframe, in order to maintain proficiencies in fire and rescue operations. These drills consisted of: simulated fire structures, confined spaces operations, infectious diseases, pumping and drafting operations, propane fires, and pumping apparatus. The time volunteers spent in pursuing training initiatives amounted to an additional 563 man-hours.

In the past, NSVFC has relied upon other surrounding fire departments' UTV's (Utility Task Vehicle) when responding to emergencies. This dependence on outside assistance added critical delays in our Response times.

Thanks to our volunteers, who steadfastly sold \$10 raffle tickets during the past five years, we finally reached our goal of purchasing our own UTV, accessories and trailer (approximately \$22,000). On September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014, our UTV was commissioned into service. During the very short time since then, our UTV has been called upon to assist in three emergencies.

GARY BARON, PRESIDENT



## **PLANNING AND ZONING OFFICIAL/LAND USE OFFICE**

I am pleased to announce that the town has hired Tom Zanarini as the new Senior Planning and Zoning Official. Tom was the Zoning official in Waterford some years ago and has been working as the Town Planner in Mill Valley, CA for the past 7 years. Tom was also a Planner in Austin, TX and Code Enforcement Officer in Lakeway, TX. He will begin the first week in January. Although I have started my new job at the Southeastern Enterprise Region (seCTer), I have been working part-time to handle land-use applications and zoning matters, until Tom starts and will help with the transition when he does arrive.

From my new position as Director of Economic Development and Marketing at seCTer, I will remain engaged with the town, assisting with strategies to retain our existing businesses and encourage new businesses to consider North Stonington. One of my focuses will be finding ways to better market the town so that we can attract investment while maintaining the quality of life everyone enjoys. I will continue to urge all Boards and Commissions to keep the Plan of Conservation and Development alive by referring to it often and giving serious attention to the implementation plan.

Though I am not at Town Hall during the day, I am there some evenings and a few hours over the weekend. Please make an appointment with Cheryl if you specifically need my assistance with any zoning matter.

JULIET HODGE, SENIOR PLANNING AND ZONING OFFICIAL

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## **ASSESSOR'S OFFICE**

As a reminder, the Department of Motor Vehicles does not notify the Assessor's Office when you sell or junk a car and turn in the license plates. You need to provide proof of sale to our office in order to receive credit on the tax bill. The plate receipt is not proof of sale. We need a copy of the bill of sale in order to process the credit. Make sure you keep a copy of the bill of sale when you sell a motor vehicle.

**ELDERLY HOMEOWNERS CREDIT:** The elderly homeowners program begins February 1, 2015. Applicants must be at least 65 years old on January 1, 2015 or have a social security disability confirmation (award letter) on file with the Assessor's Office. The maximum yearly income for a married couple is \$42,200. For a homeowner who is single, the maximum yearly income is \$34,600. All income is included for the program, including social security. The minimum benefit is 10% of your tax bill and increases based on your income. The Assessor's Office has all of the details. Applications are available and you only need to apply once every two years. If you are already on the program, you will be notified if it is your year to reapply. The application period ends May 15, 2015. A copy of your social security 1099 form and your income tax return, if you need to file this year, is required.

DARRYL L. DEL GROSSO, ASSESSOR

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## **AVALONIA LAND CONSERVANCY**

The Avalonia Land Conservancy is a land trust preserving open space in nine southeastern Connecticut towns, including 596 acres in North Stonington. There are six North Stonington properties with trails available to the public. Trail maps are available at the library or at our website, [www.avalonialandconservancy.org](http://www.avalonialandconservancy.org).

Look for our display in the Wheeler Library of our newest acquisition, Babcock Ridge. The large sign isn't up on the property yet (those are produced by students at Norwich Tech), but is easy to find at 113 Babcock Road. There is parking off the road. Follow the Blue Blazed trail. A formal dedication of the preserve will occur in the spring. We want to thank all who contributed to this acquisition of 73 acres that connect to other Avalonia properties. A recent gift nearby was the 62 acres on Reutemann Road, given by the late Adele Erisman. Avalonia is scheduling a memorial walk and work party at the Erisman Woodlands in the spring. Look for an announcement.

## NORTH STONINGTON AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE

The Town of North Stonington has received a \$400,000 grant, from the State of Connecticut, to provide interest free loans for residents with low and moderate income to make repairs and improvements to their homes. Items covered include replacement of failed septic systems, roof and window replacement and electrical upgrades, among other code compliant improvements. Applications are on the Town website and are also available at the land use office at the Town Hall. Contracting firms may apply to get on the State list of approved contractors so that they may bid on jobs available through these funds. That application is also available on the Town website. The Affordable Housing Committee plans to work with the Town to apply for the second round of funding in March.

The League of Women Voters, with assistance of the North Stonington Affordable Housing Committee, has produced an excellent and informative program on Affordable Housing. You may watch it on public access television, Channel 12, or online at [www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=lwvsect](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=lwvsect).

The basic development feasibility study for the town-owned Wintechog Hill parcel will be complete by February 2015. The site work/testing associated with this HOME-CT grant-funded work was completed in early November by Milone and MacBroom. Other deliverables will include a draft of Incentive Housing Zone regulations to be used for the parcel (or for use elsewhere in town). Our meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month at 6pm at the Wheeler High School Media Center.

MARY ANN RICKER, CO-CHAIR

[marykricer@comcast.net](mailto:marykricer@comcast.net)

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## COMMUNITY CONVERSATION UPDATE

On Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, North Stonington hosted its second community conversation, “Our Community Moving Forward Together”. The participants represented a cross section of our town; in the mix were members of our town government, school administrators, Wheeler High School students, old and new residents, and a number of active volunteers from various community groups. In total, 65 folks were involved.

The result of the four-hour-long conversation was recognition of common ground on many town issues. Participants emphasized the importance of taking action on the following issues:

1. The Plan of Conservation & Development
2. Town leadership responsibilities
3. Improvement of town-related meetings
4. More communication methods and improvement of the quality
5. Growth of public involvement

The Boards of Selectmen, Finance, and Education were well represented and were present to receive input from the group. They have demonstrated their commitment to working together to move our town forward. As progress is made on these issues, we will update you.



NITA KINCAID & LISA MAZZELLA, QUARTERLY EDITORS

[quarterly@informedcitizensofns.com](mailto:quarterly@informedcitizensofns.com)

# WINTER EVENTS

<b>JANUARY</b>					
10 <sup>th</sup>	SATURDAY	7 pm	Wheeler Library	<b><i>Cabin Fever (Bluegrass)</i></b>	Page 1
12 <sup>th</sup>	MONDAY	7 pm	Wheeler Library	<b><i>“How To: Paleo Living”</i></b>	Page 1
21 <sup>st</sup>	WEDNESDAY	7 pm	Wheeler Library	<b><i>Get organized with Sandra</i></b>	Page 1
25 <sup>th</sup>	SUNDAY	3 pm	Wheeler Library	<b><i>Music on Main Concert Series, Trombone Quartet</i></b>	Page 1
<b>FEBRUARY</b>					
6 <sup>th</sup>	FRIDAY	6 pm	Stonington VFW	<b><i>NS Education Foundation Annual Trivia Contest</i></b>	Page 2
21 <sup>st</sup>	SATURDAY	7 pm	Wheeler Library	<b><i>The Kevin Crandall Band</i></b>	Page 1
26 <sup>th</sup>	THURSDAY	6-7:30 pm	Elementary School	<b><i>Family Science Night: “Mixing It Up With Chemistry”</i></b>	Page 4
28 <sup>th</sup>	SATURDAY	12-5 pm	Olde Mistick Village	<b><i>Cabin Fever Festival/Chowder Cook-off</i></b>	Page 2
<b>MARCH</b>					
27 <sup>th</sup>	FRIDAY	6 pm	Elementary School	<b><i>NSPTO Basket Raffle</i></b>	Page 4

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