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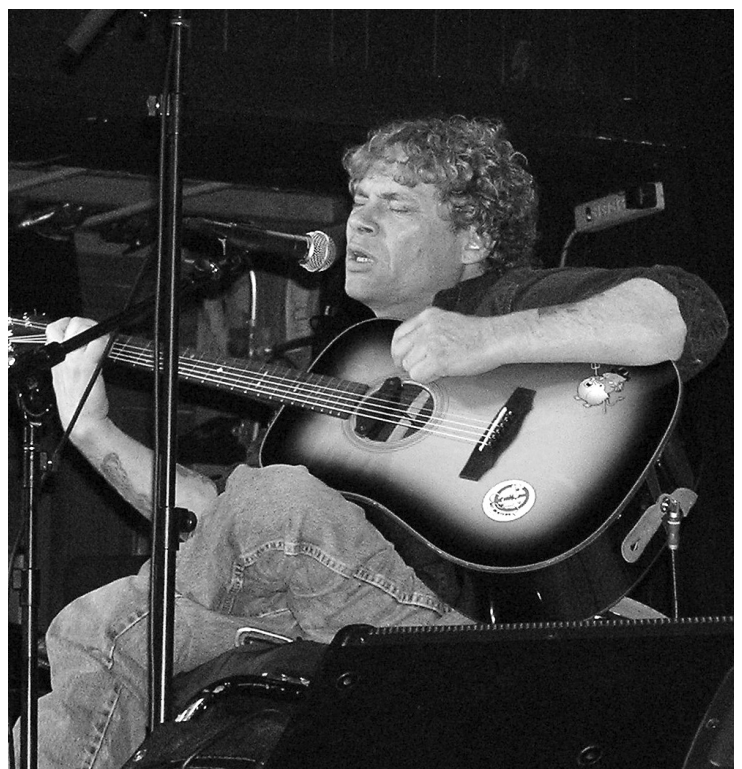
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Judy Meade, et al



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# Farmers Market To Be Open Weekly

**New regulations cause little concern**

*By Barbara Perkins*

The days are longer, the weather has definitely turned and even though the almanac won't officially reflect it, summer is truly upon us. With the flip of the most recent calendar page, more and more farmers' markets are starting their season, and Norfolk is no different.

In the last twenty years, farmers markets have enjoyed growing popularity and their number has multiplied nearly 500% statewide. More amazing is the fact that, for the 2009 season, Norfolk is one of 125 towns (out of the 169 in the state) that will host some kind of official farm market.

Beginning Saturday June 6, Norfolk's Farmers Market and Craft Fair will again occupy the field at the corner of Shepard Road and Route 44 every Saturday, rain or shine, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. through the end of October.

According to Manager Lisa Auclair, this year's market is shaping up to be great. Due to consistent town support and patronage, the decision was made to expand to a weekly event. She was happy to share the news that, in addition to the vendors folks have come to expect such as Chubby Bunny Farm, Barlow Beef and Pittsfield Rye Company, there will be quite a few new faces that are sure to

become favorites as well.

As if securing sellers, encouraging participation, supporting local agricultural business and providing fresh local produce isn't enough, a new headache for market managers and steering committees has emerged. The Connecticut Department of Public Health has updated its regulations to include farmers' markets as sites to be regulated.

According to the 122-page document, with very few exceptions anyone altering the natural state of food now must be licensed. While this may not seem to affect a farmers market because generally produce is in its natural state, it has forced market managers state-wide to turn away vendors looking to sell home produced food-stuffs, especially baked goods.

For newer markets like Norfolk's, many factors affect vendor participation. The big ones include the state's comparatively short growing season, the number of established markets competing for farm vendors and the fact that Connecticut is not an agriculturally driven state and thus doesn't have as many farmers still tilling the land. Combine these obstacles with the new ruling, and there is a definite impact on the local market. As a full time food service professional, Auclair was quick to point out that regulations such as this



PHOTO BY BRUCE FRISCH

This ribbon cutting on September, 2006 led the way for the Farmers Market to eventually be open every weekend.

one, while inconvenient, are to be expected and are in fact necessary. She said, "Really, it just comes down to safety and I understand that. I was sorry to have to turn some people away but I don't want anything to hurt the market."

She went on to mention the Backyard Gardeners table, where people can bring their own homegrown items to sell. Even though folks can't share their great grandmothers' yummy cookies, they can come and sell their extra cucumbers. Since the vendors' fees for the table were anonymously donated, anyone can come and share their bounty.

Regulations and competition aside, Norfolk residents can look forward to live music every Saturday and an average of 20 vendors per market with some variety depending on what's in season. ■

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## Conservation Commission Replaces Shrubs At Town Hall

**Invasive alien plants removed and replaced by natives**

*By Shelley Harms*

Normally quiet on weekends, Town Hall was a beehive of activity on Saturday, May 2. Those coming to appeal their assessments dodged grubby gardeners, as Norfolk's new Conservation Commission ripped out four large winged euonymus (burning bush) and Japanese barberry, and replanted the bed with eight witch hazels, two viburnums and one shadbush.

"Burning bush and Japanese barberry are alien invasive species," explained Conservation Commission chair Sue Frisch. "Birds eat their seeds and spread them far and wide. In some places, barberry has completely taken over the forest floor.

We're grateful to the Norfolk-Colebrook Garden Club, which donated the shadbush and the viburnums, and to the Northwest Conservation District, which donated the eight witch hazels."

Nash Pradhan, owner of Ginger Creek Nursery, supervised the project, which includ-



PHOTO BY SHELLEY HARMS

Conservation Commission volunteers David Torrey, Nash Pradhan, Daniel Torrey and Meredith Torrey replace invasive species with native plantings at Norfolk's Town Hall.

ed transplanting rhododendrons, hostas, daylilies and daffodils to adjacent beds. By 8 a.m., Pradhan and John Anderson had finished pulling out the large bushes using Pradhan's pickup and a sturdy chain. Shelley Harms and her family pitched in to dig up roots, pull up old landscape fabric, and transplant hostas and rhododendrons. Pebble Potter transplanted daylilies and daffodils, filling in another bed. Sue and Bruce Frisch brought the new shrubs and placed them in consultation with Pradhan. By 10:30 a.m., the mulch had been spread, dirt swept up, and everyone was ready to go home. The commission plans to add groundcover and more mulch at a later date.

"It looks great," said First Selectman Sue Dyer on Monday. "We've been wanting to do this project for some time, and are glad the Conservation Commission took it on."

Northwest Conservation District Executive Director Jean Cronauer said, "We're delighted that Norfolk is doing this. If everyone replaced their barberry and burning bush with natives, there would be more food and habitat for our native pollinators and other wildlife, and we wouldn't have so many 'escapees' threatening our forests." ■

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## Three Generations of Norfolk Veterans



PHOTO BY CAROL STEIN

Pete Giansiracusa, center, who has marched in 75 Norfolk Memorial Day parades, poses with son-in-law Jim Harrington (left) and grandson Matthew Harrington at the 2009 Memorial Day parade.

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