



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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**AS PRESERVATION PRESSURES RISE, NFEC TO RAISE AWARENESS OF  
PAST SUCCESSES AND FUTURE NEEDS TO PROTECT RURAL CORRIDORS  
THROUGH “SAVE OUR SOUND AVENUE / SAVE MAIN ROAD”  
SATURDAY, JUNE 2 AT 6:30 PM AT HALLOCKVILLE MUSEUM FARM**

**NFEC to Also Present Its Annual Environmental Awards to  
Former Riverhead Councilwoman Barbara Blass,  
Riverhead Resident Richard Wines and Southold Resident Lillian Ball**

**MATTITUCK, NY (May 14, 2012)** — Last year, the North Fork Environmental Council (NFEC), other local organizations and invited speakers helped to raise awareness and promote action to address the growing concern about how unwelcome commercial development could forever change Sound Avenue. With increased awareness, education and actions, progress in protection and preservation efforts was achieved on some fronts. But last year's efforts were just the first step in a long and winding path to protecting the rural nature of our main corridors, our hamlets and our way of life on the North Fork.

This year, attention has been brought to Main Road east of County Road 105 and several projects which threaten to change to character of Aquebogue and Jamesport. And while these projects made headlines, the real story is the escalating development pressures hamlets from Aquebogue to Orient Point face along both the Sound Ave/County Road 48 and Main Road corridors. Riverhead made significant efforts to protect the rural nature of Main Road through its Master Plan. But as seen with Sound Avenue, errors in the zoning code, loopholes and questions and concerns about project review and approval processes have eroded both the effectiveness of and confidence in what protections the Master Plan provides today.

The balance between preservation and appropriate development is not only a concern of Riverhead residents and businesses. As Southold grapples with its efforts to define and refine its own Master Plan, we must not

turn a deaf ear or a blind eye to what is happening to the west. There are lessons to be learned, the greatest of which is that suburbia and the changes it brings is continuing its eastward march. If we are to protect and preserve what makes the North Fork so special, we must act now.

But for all of the problems we face, we must also recognize and celebrate all of the efforts between the County, the Towns and organizations like the Peconic Land Trust in making significant progress in preservation efforts over the years. Bill Toedter, NFEC president said, "While there is so much still to be done, we are lucky that the efforts of so many have resulted in a great deal of preserved open spaces and historic places." Bill went on to say, "That's why this year's 'Save' event is first, a celebration of what has been accomplished and second, a chance for elected officials, organizations, residents and businesses to reconnect, recommit and redouble their efforts to protect and preserve open spaces and the rural character of our hamlets and way of life."

Georgette Keller, founder of the "Save Main Road" organization echoed those sentiments. She said, "The fight for preservation is two-fold. While residents and business owners must always remain vigilant and engaged in looking at individual projects coming before the Town for approval, we must not lose sight of the bigger picture." Georgette added, "On the one hand, we must not only understand the need for continued preservation efforts, we also must understand the processes and vehicles which are part of those efforts and make sure that they don't just reflect the sentiment of local residents and business today but that they act in their current and long-term best interests."

To help advance the cause, this year's "Save" event will also serve as the kick-off for the NFEC's "Photo What's Left" program. As pictures are worth a thousand words, the "Photo What's Left" program asks photographers of all ages and experience to enter photos of what they think makes the North Fork so special so they can help us tell the story of both the success of past and the continued need for preservation efforts on the North Fork. All entered photos will be judged and shown, and be included in a sale to help with fundraising efforts. Full details of the "Photo What's Left" program will be available at the June 2<sup>nd</sup> "Save" event.

As part of the June 2<sup>nd</sup> event, the NFEC will also be presenting its annual awards. The recipient of the NFEC's **Richard Noncarrow Environmentalist of the Year Award** will be presented to former Riverhead Councilwoman Barbara Blass for her long-standing and continued efforts to preserve the environment and the way of life on the North Fork. Among her many efforts to do what is right for the environment and people of the North Fork, both as an elected official and as a private citizen, are:

- her 30 plus years of devoted work in Riverhead as part of the Planning Board including five years as Chairwoman, as Councilwoman and as concerned and active private citizen,
- her leadership in updating Riverhead's Master Plan that would help to protect open spaces and the rural character of both Sound Avenue and Main Road, east of County Road 105,
- her continued efforts to raise the environmental consciousness of land-use decisions on the North Fork, and
- her active participation in multiple events and organizations across the North Fork, including the New York League of Conservation Voters, the Peconic Estuary Program – Citizens' Advisory Committee, the NFEC and the Group for the East End, among others.

Ms. Blass' leadership on these and other issues of special interest to the North Fork makes her a deserving recipient of this award.

Other recognitions include the **Environmental Champions of the Year**, being presented this year to Richard Wines (Riverhead) and Lillian Ball (Southold).

Richard Wines has a long connection with the North Fork and efforts to preserve its history as a way to protect its future. A man of many hats – historian, author, chairman of Riverhead's Landmarks Preservation Commission, Board member of the Hallockville Museum Farm and president of the Jamesport Meeting House Trust, among others – Richard has spent countless hours researching, documenting and leading key efforts to maintain open spaces, agriculture and the North Fork's way of life. His passion and tireless efforts deserve this recognition as an NFEC Environmental Champion.

Lillian Ball's connection with the North Fork may not be as long as Richard's but her passion is no less. An accomplished artist who has concentrated her works on nature and the environment, Lillian uses her talent, vision and passion to advance the cause of environmental protection through public education. Her Waterwash™ installation at Mattituck Inlet in 2009, and more recently on the Bronx River, combine manmade material, natural vegetation, improved design and construction techniques, and informational signs to reduce stormwater runoff and educate the public about preserving our wetlands and water quality. Currently serving on Southold's Land Preservation Committee, Lillian is a role model of the active, concerned citizen and is deserving of the recognition as an NFEC Environmental Champion.

The “Save Our Sound Ave / Save Main Road” event is being held on Saturday, June 2 from 6:30 to 9:00 PM at the Hallockville Museum Farm in Riverhead on Sound Avenue. Tickets will be available online at the NFEC Web site beginning Tuesday, May 15 or can be purchased through the NFEC offices at 631-298-8880.

Tickets purchased in advance are \$35 a piece or \$60 for two. Included in the cost are a glass of wine and appetizers. Tickets purchased at the door will be \$40 and \$70 respectively. All net proceeds of ticket sales and raffle/auction prizes will be shared between the Save Main Road, Riverhead Neighborhood Preservation Coalition (RNPC) and NFEC to assist these and other groups with their continued efforts to protect and preserve Sound Avenue, Main Road and the way of life on the North Fork, from Wading River to Orient Point.

Invited speakers include NYS Senator Ken LaValle, NTS Assemblyman Fred Thiele, Jr., Suffolk County Legislator Ed Romiane, Riverhead Supervisor Sean Walter, Southold Supervisor Scott Russell, Executive Director of the LI Pine Barrens Society Dick Amper, and President of the LI Farm Bureau Joe Gergela, Dominique Mendez of the RNPC, Georgette Keller of Save Main Road, among others. A list of final speakers will be made available by Monday, May 21.

The NFEC is celebrating its 40th anniversary. Its core mission as a grassroots organization is to increase public awareness of key issues, educate the public and public officials about important environmental and quality of life topics, and help the public's voice to be heard regarding the formation of key public programs, policies and legislation. Incorporated in 1972, the NFEC remains dedicated to the preservation of land, sea, air and quality of life on Long Island's North Fork and its identifying motto, "Save What's Left!"

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