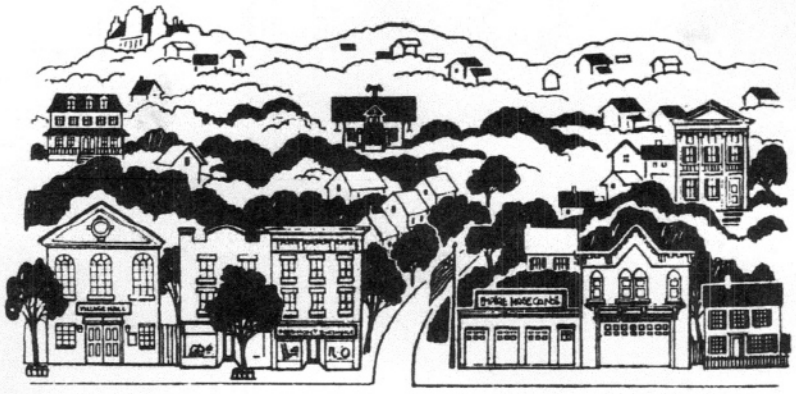
The Piermont Newsletter

VOLUME XXIII, NO. 5 PUBLISHED BY THE PIERMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION DECEMBER 1988



Village Responds to Pier Lawsuit Charges

Piermont calls charges in a lawsuit, aimed at halting the mixed use development of the Pier, "at best...a conglomeration of baseless, unsupportable and frivolous arguments."

In his 36-page rebuttal to the suit, Village Attorney Raymond G. Icobelli pleads that without "clear proof that the Village Board acted illegally or arbitrarily the Court should not use its authority to overrule the Village Board."

"The Village Board's decision is clearly supported by law and is, therefore, entitled to the presumption of regularity and validity," he writes.

Suing Piermont is a coalition of environmental groups and local residents. The coalition wants a State Supreme Court Judge in New City to overturn three Village Board decisions permitting the Pier development to move ahead.

The decisions granted the developer, the Piermont Carlyle Corporation, a zone change, approved its site plan and accepted an environmental impact statement.

The plaintiffs want to stop the mixed-use development of the 34.5 acre Pier site. Planned are 252 residential units, stores, boat storage facility, a restaurant, office space and health club.

Icobelli's response is an effort to refute charges that the Village Board did not:

. Adequately consider the traffic impact of the development on the community or on the Piermont marsh;

. Deal with "newly discovered information" regarding hazardous waste;

. Adequately consider sewer capacity;

. Consider the possible adverse environmental effects of a marina on the Hudson River or the marsh because it "segmented" or separated this portion of the project from the rest.

Exhaustive traffic studies, responds Icobelli, by Lawler, Matusky and Skelly, an engineering firm hired by the Village, prove that the traffic impact is "acceptable." Further, the New York State Department of Transportation said the impact on Route 9W would be "minor".

About the marsh, Icobelli replies that separating it from the the development are a chain link fence, park land and Ferry Road.

In addition, he asserts that the planned public walkway on the north side of the Pier should reduce the number of pedestrians on Ferry Road. The developer is also directing all storm water runoff away from the marsh.

The Village answers the hazardous waste charge by replying that it has reopened the review procedure required by the State Environmental Review Act (SEQRA) and is assessing the "newly discovered facts" with a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).

To the sewer capacity issue, Icobelli replies, that "the bedrock question is whether or not the sewer district has agreed to provide for the requirements of the development. The answer ...is yes."

Icobelli denies that the Board separated the approval process for the marina from the Pier development to ease the SEQRA process. He claims that Carlyle has never formally submitted a proposal to build the marina. The Village, he maintains, owns the marina site, not the developer.

The three environmental groups that brought the suit against the Village are The Hudson River Fisherman's Association, The Hudson River Defense League and Scenic Hudson.

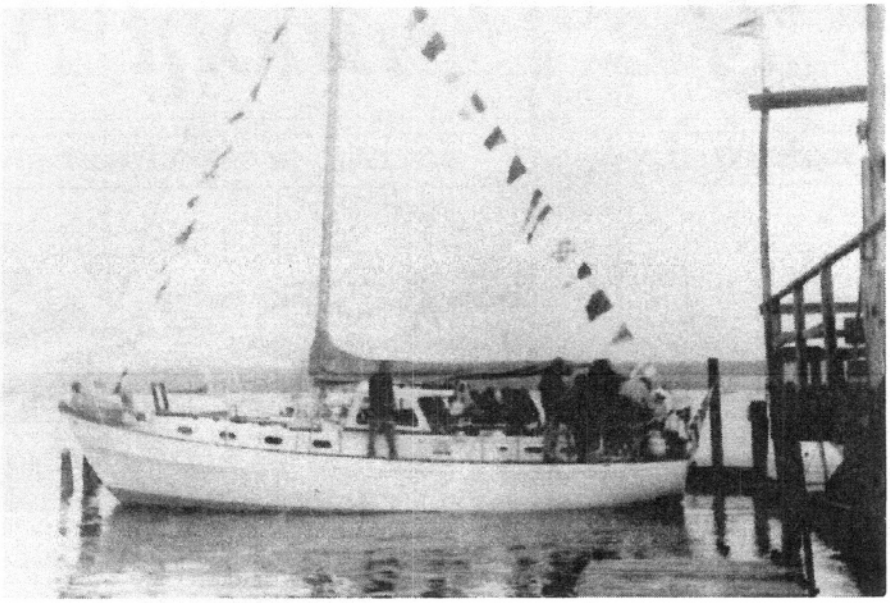
Joining in the action are Thomas G. Mitchell, Paula C. Huggins, Marguerite Feitlowitz, Wendy Lee Plogar, David Anderson, Leslie Stewart, Ewan C. MacQueen and Barbara Enzig, all local residents.

Representing the plaintiffs are Michael S. Elder of Elder and Long in Kingston, and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of the Natural Resources Defense Council in White Plains. Kennedy is the son of the late United States Senator.

Bob Samuels

Piermonters Migrate Aboard Ketch

The "Imogene Williams" in dressed ship regalia
Photo by Fred Burrell



To Ted and Lisa Merrill of Franklin Street, the upcoming blizzard of '89 will be only hearsay. The Merrills will be comfortably aboard their motorsailer, the 39-foot Imogene Williams, somewhere in the Caribbean during the winter months. They left late in October amid a flurry of get-togethers with well-wishers, and last heard from were in St. Augustine. They plan to cruise leisurely down the inland waterway in time to arrive at Ted's mother's house in Florida for the holidays.

At present, their house is occupied by four Lamonters. Ted and Lisa expect to arrive back in Piermont next June. We wish the lucky couple fair skies and warm days.

Rosemary Cone

Ex-Mayor Finds Village Problems Never Go Away

The writer of this article was Piermont Mayor from 1971 to 1981.

What most of us like best about the Village is the sense of familiarity and timelessness it gives us. Some things change, but enough stays the same to make us feel comfortable.

One day recently, I spent a few pleasant hours leafing through old leather-bound volumes of Village Board minutes.

From 1888 in Clerk William Earling's beautiful copperplate script we learn that the Village Board assembles at the Empire Hose Company meeting room. President Kempton and Trustees Kane, Mahoney, Peterson and Quinlan approved payment of the highway department payroll for the month of March: $20.30. Seven men received between $1.00 and $4.80 each.

In 1913 minutes record frequent references to the Board of Health, and meetings were still held on the second floor of the Empire Hose Company. President Wood, Trustees Austin, Chichester and Duncan were an activist Board, amending laws to read: "No dog shall be permitted to run at large unless

This Board also kept Clerk Parnell busy notifying Mr. W.H.M. to have his sidewalk fixed properly on or before May 1st, else the Village would attend to same and charge the expense to said property holder. Clerk Parnell was also to notify citizens that city water would soon be available to the Village, and all were urged "to install some". It was further noted by the Board that unknown persons dumped refuse on land near Tate, and the Board of Health was to be notified.

By 1938 Village Board meetings were lengthy, dealing with problems such as the outrageous demands of the Spring Valley Water Company for hydrants; traffic light installation at Piermont and Paradise Avenues; the request from the Erie Railroad to substitute a crossing gate for flashing lights and a watchman.

To assist them, Mayor Hogan, Trustees Bick, Hurban, Piper and Stebbins had a Slum Clearance Commission. Clerk Auryansen fired off telegrams to Albany concerning the W.P.A. project of interest to all citizens--the construction of the Village Hall. Comfort Coal and Lumber Co., low bidder, was awarded the Village Hall hardware contract for $165., and a bid of $648. won the millwork contract.

Fire Department concerns were heard as Mr. O'Hara called the Board's attention to the difficulty the Fire Department had due to cars parked on Hudson Terrace. The matter was referred to the Police Committee.

It was agreed that the fee for the use of the Village Hall would be waived for the Ladies Auxiliary meeting "because the ladies are a great help."

In 1963 Mayor Memmolo congratulated the Highway Department for the splendid work that they had been doing in keeping streets clear of snow. Trustees DiFrancesca, Hickey, Lowry and Lynch sought more details from Mr. Yuda (who, by this time, had already served many years as Village Engineer) about the sewer project. Included in the work would be expansion of the Ferdon Avenue pump station capacity, as well as the enlargement of the Piermont Avenue pump station and installation of new lines.

It was noted that the Village Hall was being used regularly for church services. Village Clerk John A. Boyan read a report describing the difficulty the Fire Department was having in driving along Hudson Terrace because of parked cars.

If you attend meetings in 1988, you will, no doubt, hear the Village Board approve abstracts detailing Highway Department payroll items, and though the costs will be many times greater that the 1888 wages, someone will express the thought that the department does a fantastic job of snow removal. You are sure to hear a repeat of the 1913 concerns about "unknown persons dumping refuse", dogs running loose, and a property owner who isn't maintaining his

Continued on page 15

This is the Way It Was –

Piermont Between the Wars

From the collection of Howard Brawner

"I could remember, as a young man, the main street in town still wasn't paved. Most people still rode around in horse and carriages, and there were watering troughs for the horses in front of most of the buildings. There was a big one with a fountain in it, right where Xavier's Restaurant is today. We had three butcher shops, four or five restaurants, lots of hotels, two diners, two tailors, a Grand Union, a Butler's and a Bohacks, two drug stores, two shoe makers, two clothing stores, and the present Post Office was the blacksmith's shop."

Over a cup of tea, Frank Scolaro, who has lived in Piermont since 1912, and has had his barber shop going for 57 of his 76 years, reminisced for the Newsletter. Most of his remembrances covered the years from 1918 through the 1930's.

"Every day Gerlack's Bakery wagon loaded up with fresh-made breads, rolls and cakes for delivery to folks in Tappan, Orangeburg and Blauvelt. You gotta remember, it was very rural here then. There was no 9W to speak of. That was also just a dirt road. In some ways Piermont was bigger than Nyack."

"Right behind me," Frank pointing to where the new Carlyle development is to rise, "was Lawson's Livery barn. Most everybody kept their horses there. Then, of course, right across the street from the Post Office (then, the Blacksmith's) was Ferrante's Grocery where the murder took place. And still to this day, nobody knows who the killer was."

"In those days, there was a lot of business here. The terminal for the Erie Railroad was still here before they moved it to Jersey City. Lots of men worked for the railroad and lived here in the many hotels. The old Gair Paper Company, alone, employed about 1200 people."

When asked what folks did for entertainment, Frank's warm face lit up even further.

"Gosh, there was so much to do here. First of all, there were white sandy beaches stretching right up through to Grandview. Every weekend during the summer 50 buses used to come up from the city and Jersey. It was like a little Coney Island here. Right up where Cornettas is today, was a bowling alley, a carousel, hand swings, a dance hall. I ran a pool hall next to the barber shop, and if that wasn't enough, we had about thirteen saloons."

When asked what Piermont lacked in the early days, Frank scratched his head for a moment, "You know that's a funny thing, we never had a movie house or a bank. Both of those were in Sparkill. Mr. Bauer was supposed to build the bank here but at the last minute built it in Sparkill. And the little movie theatre is still standing in Sparkill. You wouldn't recognize it. Today it's a private house."

Frank has lived most of his years on Main Street, and with all the many changes that have taken place, he still says, "Piermont is still the same."

Wouldn't it be great, though, if we had white sandy beaches to swim from this summer?

Don Blauhut

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What's Sauce for the Goose...

With all the attention being paid to Piermont's environment by some neighboring communities, it seems inevitable that someone in Piermont would reply in kind. This whimsical letter actually drew a response from the DEC.

123 Paradise Avenue
Piermont, New York 10968
10 November 1988

Paul Keller
Regional Director
NYSDEC Region 3
21 South Putt Corners Road
New Paltz, New York 12561

Dear Mr. Keller:

I am advised by a highly-placed reliable source that radioactive waste emanating from the former Nike site to the west of Route 9W in Orangetown, New York, has drained eastward and downward and under 9W into the entire village of Grandview, contaminating it.

I sincerely hope that your tests of this alleged hazard prove to be negative and thus spare Grandview the need to excavate itself into another Babel. (My reference is biblical because the Environment is sacred to me.)

I trust that your response to my report of possible nuclear holocaust in a village contiguous to my own will be distinguished by the same alacrity and care which your office has shown in responding to other alarming reports made by other concerned citizens.

Yours truly,
Robert B. Sennish

cc: Hon. Mario Cuomo, Governer
Hon. Lorraine Moscow, Mayor of Grandview
Hon. William Goswick, Mayor of Piermont

New York State
Department of
Environmental Conservation
21 South Putt Corners Road
New Paltz, NY 12561
(914) 255-5453
November 17, 1988

Robert B. Sennish
123 Paradise Avenue
Piermont, NY 10968

Dear Sir:

Paul Keller has referred your November 11, 1988 letter to me for response.

I have forwarded the letter to Dr. Paul Merges in the Bureau of Energy and Radiation for consideration and appropriate DEC response. He will be in contact with you.

Very truly yours,
Albert Klauss
Regional Engineer
Region 3

AK:ss

cc: Dr. Paul Merges, DHSR, Albany

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Tappan Zee II Update

Much attention has been given recently to the recommendation for the building of another cross-Hudson bridge - possibly across the Tappan Zee. While little has surfaced about this issue in headlines lately, there has been a lot of activity in the region that could easily bring the Tappan Zee II concept back into the spotlight.

The New York State Department of Transportation has been holding monthly meetings of its High Occupancy Vehicle/Traffic Systems Management Task Force to study and find solutions for commuter congestion on the Tappan Zee Bridge.

The river village representatives at these meetings: Lorraine Moscow, Mayor of the Village of Grandview; Hazard Gillespie, President of the Tappan Zee Preservation Coalition, and I have been impressed by the DOT's conscientious, workmanlike effort. Today's commuter is already benefiting from the additional traffic lane eastbound on the bridge and added toll plazas, and can look forward to High Occupancy Vehicle lanes, eastbound in the morning, westbound in the evening, in the near future. Improved mass transportation options--buses, vans, monorail--are also in the study stage. Of these three, monorail is the most costly and problematic, given the range of Westchester destinations needing to be serviced.

Traffic movement on the Tappan Zee bridge is not the usual concern of local government, or conservationists. But in this case, with the possibility of a new cross-Hudson span, we are monitoring regional traffic planning.

What is truly troubling to this observer is that the DOT's approach to today's TZ bridge problems is a myopic one, focusing on the Rockland to Westchester commuter, who, in no way, represents the total picture of present or future usage of the Suffern-Westchester corridor.

Localized bridge-traffic problem solving doesn't take into consideration the completion of the I-287 connection on Suffern, which will hook-up the thruway with New Jersey's I-287, crossing the bridge, crossing Westchester on an expanded I-287 to the New England Thruway, creating a Beltway around New York City--a major commercial route to New England, not simply a commuter route.

No amount of HOV's will alleviate the load of commercial traffic on this corridor.

By making interchange improvements to funnel traffic across the bridge, Mayor Moscow feels the DOT is ignoring the growth in Rockland and Orange Counties parallel to the river, growth that is creating its own centers of employment.

These northern centers of industry and commerce will be screaming for traffic improvements within the next few years, so the creation of a commercial beltway across the Tappan Zee is simply poor planning.

Hazard Gillespie envisions the completion, in two years, of the I-287 New Jersey connection, overwhelming any solutions to commuter traffic that the task force has come up with. His concern is that DOT will throw up its hands, saying it has tried HOV's, TMS's and they are not enough--time for a new span.

Isabelle Savell, founder of the Tappan Zee preservation coalition would say "Don't double-cross the Tappan Zee" by believing that localized commuter traffic solutions will play any part as a deterrent to a second bridge. I have to agree.

In the meantime, the commuter is placated by improved conditions; legislators say funding for a bridge isn't there; and representatives from the River Villages, as well as the Tappan Zee Preservation Coalition, and Westchester's Federated Conservationists (skeptics that we are) will continue to attend strategy sessions and demand that the New York State Department of Transportation look at the bigger picture--the future needs of regional growth, and trucking--not just the Rockland-Westchester commuter, and plan accordingly.

Margaret Grace

HISTORY QUIZ

Can you name this Piermont event? Whoever names the closest date and description of what's going on in this picture by Sally Savage wins a free PCA tote bag with a design of Main Street. Phone Sally at 359-5735; be sure to leave your name and address clearly if you get the answering machine.

The Piermont Newsletter is published four times a year by the Piermont Civic Association, Piermont, NY 10968.

Contributors to this issue: Don Blauhut, Mimi Bryan, John Dippel, Margaret Grace, Grace Meyer, Bob Samules, Sally Savage, Bob and Peggy Sennish, and Leslie Stewart. Editors: Bob and Rosemary Cone.

Layout and design: Geraldine Celander.

Featured guests at a reception sponsored by the Community Playgroup, held in honor of Phyllis Helbraun, executive director of the Rockland Council for Young Children. Left to right: Elizabeth O'Connor, representing District Attorney Kenneth Gribbetz; John Dippel, board president of the Community Playgroup; Jean Mian, chair of the Rockland Child Care Coalition; Phyllis Helbraun; Mary Jane Pauling, director of Nyack Head Start; State Senator Eugene Levy; Elaine Trotta, director of the Community Playgroup; Harriet Cornell, member of the County Legislautre; and Dr. Thomas Clark, president of Rockland Community College.

Is There a Pre-Schooler in the House?

If you have a pre-schooler tumbling around the house, now's the time to check into The Community Playgroup. Located in the Community Center, the Playgroup offers a variety of programs designed to serve the needs of children in the area.

There's a full-day program for pre-schoolers, an after-school program for kindergarteners, morning programs for 3 and 4-year olds, and a new toddler-mom program for the younger set. Plans are in the works to institute a Lamaze childbirth class for the pre-natal crowd, starting in January.

The Community Playgroup is a private non-profit organization dedicated to pre-school children. Now entering its 25th year, the Playgroup thrives, thanks to Director Elaine Trotta, teachers Amy Cole, Lisa Walsh, Laura Hudson, Carolyn Klein and Maureen Hobday; office staff Barbara Donizetti and Lois Holmes, and the many whose efforts over the years have helped make its programs so successful.

This past November, the Playgroup recognized such an individual. Phyllis Helbraun, Executive Director of the Rockland County Council for Young Children, was honored with a reception for her many years of service and long-standing support of the Playgroup. The dedication and perserverance of individuals like Phyllis allows the Playgroup to provide the high quality, affordable child care that has become synonymous with its name.

If you're interested in enrolling a child in the Playgroup, or if you're a Playgroup alum or former staff member who'd like to take part in a 25th anniversary celebration, please call 359-9174.

John Dippel

New Places on Main Street

Shopping in Piermont is always a pleasant, peaceful experience, even with the holiday season in full swing.

New to Main street this year is Whispering Pines, which occupies the former site of the Hudson Valley Bazaar (now located at the other end of the block). The scent of balsam and birchbark are overwhelming as one enters this palace of Adirondack nostalgia. Memories of summer camp prevail at the sight of colorful wool blankets, pine-stuffed pillows in every size, beaded Indian-style jewelry, birch bark souvenir canoes, and wooden Adirondack chairs. There is an excellent selection of books as well as gifts of all types.

Down the street a bit is L'Atelier, the new gallery of fine arts. In addition to December's featured Russian and Bulgarian art, the gallery displays unusual furniture and objets d'art from the Orient as well as the United States. Previous exhibits have included photographs of Hudson River sunrises by Irving Swire, antique Oriental scrolls on silk and rice paper, bronze sculptures, and Chinese and Japanese porcelains.

Up at the other end of Main Street we begin salivating at the mere suggestion of the Bittersweet Truffle Cake at Bittersweet Pastries. Described by its creator as "sinfully rich, deliciously dark, very dense and very creamy", this chocolate confection can be shipped anywhere in the U.S. from October through May. Any number of delectable goodies can be ordered here for holiday gifts and dessert.

Leslie Stewart

At the Library

The Piermont Library is ready for the holidays with hand-made ornaments and decorations on display, along with books on how to make them. The annual children's Christmas party, when children make ornaments and string popcorn and cranberries to decorate the Library's Christmas tree, will be held on Thursday, December 15, at four o'clock. This is one of the most popular events of the year, so if you have small children, mark it on your calendar. Refreshments are also served.

In January the Library's display will focus on the newly printed publication, "Around & About Rockland County: A Guide for Families & Children's Groups", published by the Library Association of Rockland County and the Rockland Council for Young Children through a grant from the Rockland County Legislature. It was illustrated by the Library's artist, Grace Mitchell. Her original drawings will be on display, along with copies of the book priced at $4.00.

Barbara Sandson's colored photographs of Piermont will be exhibited throughout the month of February. You may have seen some of them at the Riverside Cafe or at the Street Fairs in Piermont. Barbara has lived in Piermont for the past several years and is "very much enamored with the uniqueness of the Village", its "subtleties and fragile beauty". She hopes to capture its "timeless quality". Her photographs have been exhibited at the Burd House Gallery in Nyack, the Mamaroneck Artists' Guild Annual Exhibition, and the Cork Gallery at Avery Fisher Hall in Lincoln Center.

The Library is in the process of updating the registrations of all its members. If your card is out-of-date or lost, please come in and renew your membership. The new card you'll be given can be used in any library in Rockland County.

January is Amnesty Month at the Library. Any overdue material can be returned free of charge. We offer this in an effort to maintain our collection. If you know a book is lost, please let us know so it can be replaced. This means better library service for you.

Lately, several newcomers have rushed in the Library to ask where it's okay to park. There are three or four spaces directly across from the Library, but if you drive north on Hudson Terrace, you'll find more parking; and, during daytime hours, there are another three or four slots along the south side of the Library, on First Street (which runs uphill from Hudson Terrace). If you do park on First, come in the back door of the Library which brings you to the second floor, or adult section, without stairs to climb.

The pleasantest walk is along the Erie Path, coming down First Street and entering through the back door. The Library is at 153 Hudson Terrace. For hours or further information, call 359-4595.

Grace Meyer

★★★★★★★★★★★★★

... December 1988 PAL will sponsor a trip to the New Jersey Devils game. Tickets are free to residents ages 10 - 18 and can be obtained through Police Officer O'Shea or PAL President Joseph Krummack.
... January 1989 - PAL will sponsor a free trip to a New Jersey Nets game.
... 1/25/89 1 p.m. Basic Self Defense for Senior Citizens class will be given by FBI Self Defense Instructor P.O. Joseph Artrip and Kubaton Instructor P.O. Michael O'Shea of the Piermont Police Department.
... 1/25/89 - Basic Self Defense for Women class at the Piermont Community Center from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.
... February 1989 - PAL / STOP DWI Alcohol Awareness Night-date to be announced.

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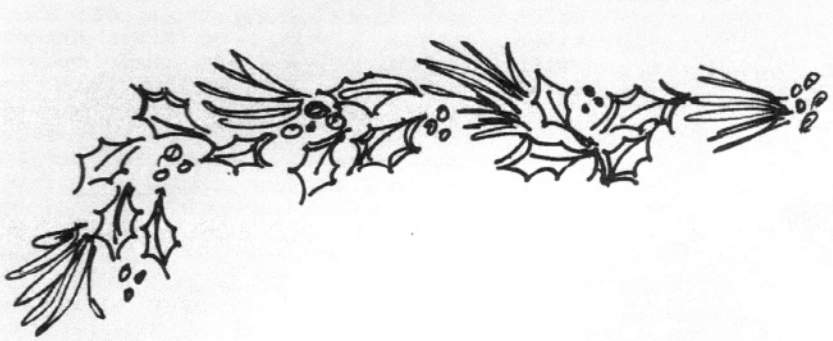
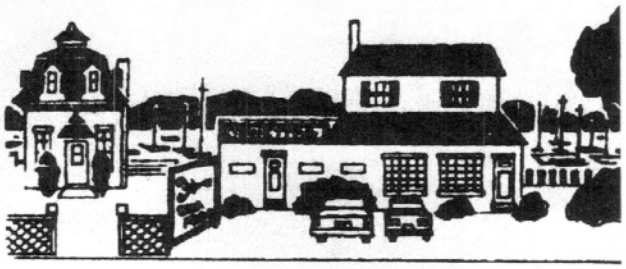




President's Corner

Margaret Grace was elected PCA President during the annual election of officers at our November meeting.

Ms. Grace will not be able to take office until March when her term as a Village Board Trustee expires. She is not seeking reelection to that post.

As many Village residents already know, Margaret brings great energy, experience and imagination to every job she tackles. The PCA Board is certain she'll be a terrific President.

Until March, I'll continue serving as Acting President. After that, I'll remain as Vice President.

Other officers include Rosemary Cone, Treasurer; Peggy Fox Sennish, Secretary; Hazel Kim and Frances Pellegrini, Members at Large.

***

If you missed the PCA's annual Halloween Party you missed a great blast.

The Village Hall, the party's usual location, was booked for another event so we had to look elsewhere.

Fortunately, Charles Mouquin and his wife P.J., agreed to let us take over their house for the evening. The Mouquins, in case you can't place the name, live in that large Victorian mansion up on Rockland Road.

It is a Charles Addamsish kind of building, a natural setting for a Halloween Party. Early in the day a decorating crew headed by Margaret Grace changed the Mouquins cheerful home into a properly spooky setting.

A good crowd turned out to enjoy the dancing, gourmet hors d'oeuvres and open bar. Judges awarded prizes for the best costumes.

***

The PCA continues to need your active participation. If you haven't yet joined, sign up today. If you are already a member, please try to become more active.

We have a lot of fun. Besides the Halloween Party, we sponsor the annual Blue Grass Fair and Spring Dinner. Every other year we hold a newcomers' party.

We also try to improve life here for everyone. Earlier this year we gave the Playgroup a substantial cash donation and supplied much of the labor for its Children's Festival. Our successful fund raising events benefit many Piermont organizations.

The Newsletter you're now reading keeps our residents better informed than residents of other communities and helps give our Village a sense of itself that's rare in today's suburbs.

If you enjoy Main Street's trees and Kane Park's gazebo, thank earlier PCA Boards who gave these gracious amenities to Piermont. Today we're considering improving the Village Hall's acoustics and refurbishing Kane Park.

However, we need active members and we need volunteers for our events. We can always use new writers and editors on the Newsletter. If you are interested please call Rosemary Cone at 359-0854.

Happy holidays!

Bob Samuels

No Hunting in Piermont

Police Chief Tom Gaynor ha received an urgent request fro the Principal of Tappan Ze Elementary School, asking that h remind the residents in th Village that the school grounds which include the Cowboy Fiel Area, are private property an that NO HUNTING IS ALLOWED.

In recent weeks, adolescents with compound bows have bee playing in the wooded areas o the property, posing a great ris to the children who use thos woods as part of the nature trail maintained by the school.

Reports of violations should be made promptly to the Piermont Police for the sake of protecting our school children.

Join Us! The Piermont Civic Association is a nonprofit group dedicated to the betterment of Piermont. Thanks to membership dues, numerous fundraising events and uncounted hours of volunteer work, Piermont has its NEWSLETTER, Main Street has its trees, bike rack and flower pots, Kane Park has its gazebo and the Community Playgroup, Empire Hose and PAL have received generous donations, to name a few PCA accomplishments.

I have enclosed: $_____ 1988 PCA Family Membership ($10.00 includes NEWSLETTER)

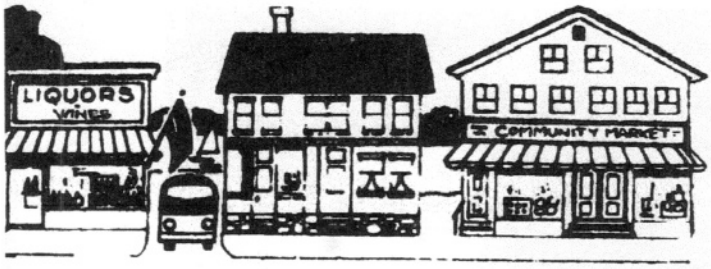
NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

TableSet of Piermont, Inc.

460 Main Street • Piermont, NY 10968 • (914) 359-3533

Caroline Tapley



Ex-Piermont Students Pen Walkers' Manual

Two women who first met in their fourth grade class at the old Piermont Elementary School 40 years ago have just published a well-received book about walks in the New York area.

It includes a description of two walks in Rockland. One of those is along Piermont's Erie Path.

Marina Biaggi Harrison and Lucy Davidson Rosenfeld say the teacher sat them next to one another. The Biaggi family had just moved to Upper Grand View and the Davidsons lived on Orchard Terrace in Piermont.

The two girls soon became best friends. Their friendship continued though Nyack High School and, although they attended separate schools, through college.

Each married musicians. Lucy's husband Peter Rosenfeld, is a cellist, and Marina married James Harrison, a music professor.

The Harrisons still live just down 9W from Piermont, in Palisades. The Rosenfelds settled in Leonia, N.J., just 17 miles away. While their children were growing up (the families had five between them), the women went on outings together.

They arranged these every other week trips around their kids' schedules and their own careers. Rosenfeld, a writer on art, has just published her third book. Harrison is a freelance textbook production editor.

Their journeys and long friendship recently yielded "A Walker's Guidebook," a marvelously useful new book. It gives detailed descriptions of 42 separate excursions within two hours of New York City, including the two in Rockland. Like its authors, the book is lively, literate and informatively opinionated.

("A Walker's Guidebook" is available at the Piermont Library and at Nyack's Pickwick Bookstore.)

"We'd go to see interesting estates we'd heard about or just drive out to the country," Rosenfeld recalls. "Then we became interested in villages. That's how it started."

"While we were exploring we got the idea of putting it all down on paper," adds Harrison, who spent her early years in Europe and still has a slight, charming accent. "We thought it would be more interesting to have some sort of a goal. Then we decided it would be fun to make a book out of our idea."

"We wanted places which were still unspoiled, places that had retained some architectural identity," Rosenfeld said. "We started writing them up with the idea of someday putting them together into a book and finding a publisher."

The publisher they eventually found, Michael Kesend Publishing, Ltd. of Manhattan, suggested expanding the manuscript to include nature and bird watcher walks. That's why the $12.95 paperback carries the somewhat unwieldy subtitle, "Serendipitous Outings Near New York City, Including a Section for Birders."

The chapter on the Piermont walk is typical of the book. It begins by telling New Yorkers how to drive here. A two-page description of the area follows:

"...you amble along a former railroad track bed," they write, "high above the Hudson, overlooking Victorian Frame houses that line the river. Coming back, we suggest you go down to River Road and enjoy the river and the houses up close."

Alongside the description of the walk itself is a charming pen and ink map, drawn by Rosenfeld, who did all the book's maps. She is the daughter of Morris Davidson, the late artist.

The next section, "After The Walk," suggests several nearby places to see and visit. Tallman Mountain State Park and Tappan are among the recommendations.

Collaborating put no strains on their friendship. But who is

Continued on page 10

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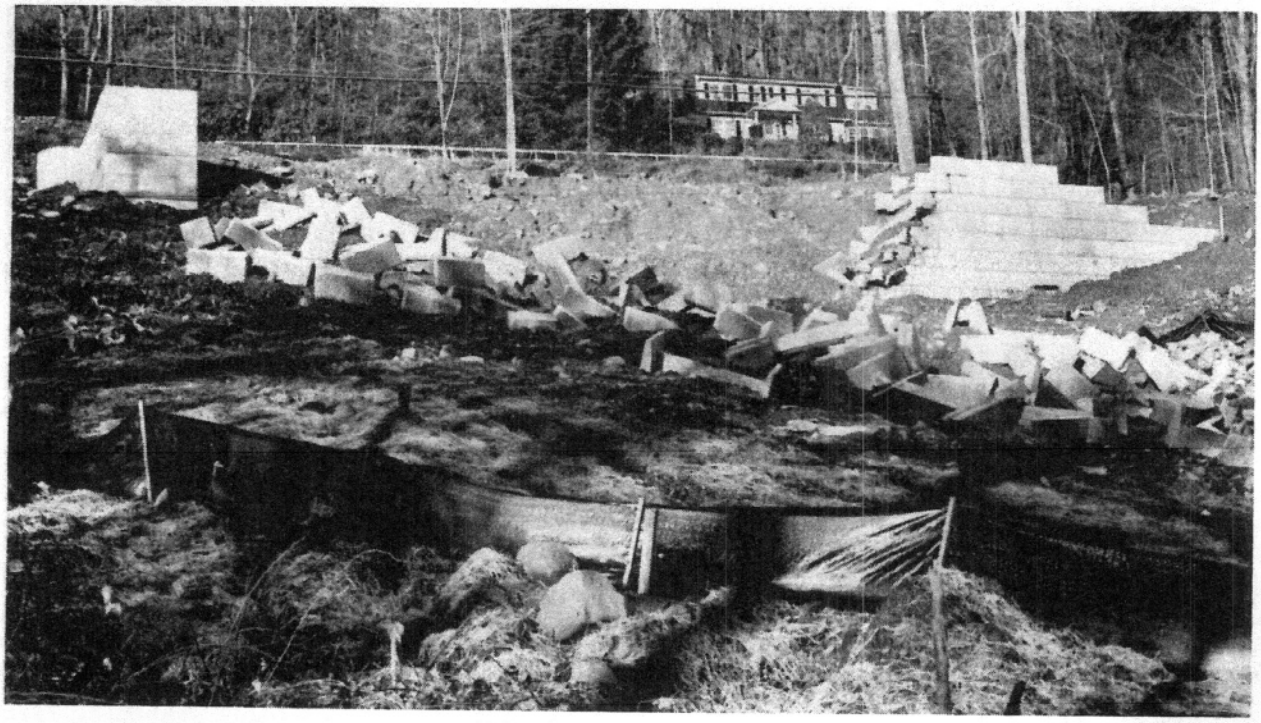

LONDON BRIDGE IS FALLING...

Developer Kenny Bergstol, whose clear-cutting of his 9W lotjust north of Piermont caused consternation, built a retaining wall-- and look what happened. The trouble-plagued lot will be the site of a single-family house. Photo by Sally Savage.

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WALK continued from pg. 9

the real author? "We both wrote every word," Rosenfeld says, laughing.

"After each outing Lucy would write one section and I would write the other," explains Harrison. "Then we kept rewriting and reversing it so eventually everything had the same voice. Since Lucy did the maps, I did all the typing."

Obviously what delighted them the most was the opportunity the book gave them to continue their long friendship.

"We're great gabbers," admits Rosenfeld. "We've been yakking for 40 years and we never run out of things to talk about. The "Walker's Guidebook" is just a continuation -- an excuse to do more talking."

They've already begun researching a new book. They won't say exactly what it's about but it's certain to keep the conversation rolling along.

Bob Samuels

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The Editor's View

For months, Piermont has been bombarded with allegations of toxic wastes on the Pier, the detritus of a former paper-processing plant there. The claims have come from a group calling itself Residents for Responsible Riverfront Development, comprising a handful of area residents who are suing the Village Board for laxity in enforcing environmental standards. Do the facts warrant these allegations, which have been spread through the mail, the newspapers, and the Department of Environmental Conservation?

The RRRD alleges:

Toxic wastes on the sites of former buildings. A dry well was discovered into which paint thinner and other solvents had been poured. It was excavated, and the contents disposed of in a hazardous waste site. Also, PCB's had once dripped from a broken transformer. This waste, too, has been removed. There is no evidence that other problem areas exist.

Toxins in the settling basins. The former Clevepak mill recycled newsprint into egg cartons; it did not make paper. Newsprint has the lowest dioxin content of any commercial paper. "No processes at the mill formed dioxin," stated Patrick Lawler of Lawler, Matusky & Skelly, environmental engineers. Lawler estimated that less than a tenth of a millionth of a pound of dioxin was deposited over a ten year period--well below what the EPA considers as safe.

Toxic wastes atop the ballfield. Across Ferry Road from the property that the Carlyle Corp. hopes to develop is the Village ballfield, which the RRRD claims was topped with tainted sludge from the two settling basins. Actually, the sludge was tested by the DEC, found to be non-toxic, and deposited not on the ballfield but in the Clarkstown dump--under DEC supervision.

Toxic wastes under the ballfield. The litigant group claims a former millhand to be the source of this allegation, but refuses to divulge his or her name. In contrast, a number of former mill workers have stated in public that the allegation is very unlikely. If the RRRD does not produce a witness, the Village may have to test the entire ballfield for toxins, a costly business for taxpayers, especially since the ballfield is covered with three feet of new topsoil.

The Village Board has been negligent on toxic wastes. The Board has followed up every lead it got. Unfortunately, time was wasted not by the Board but by the RRRD. Instead of informing the Village about the supposed ballpark hazards, the group wrote secretly to the DEC, which only notified the Village months later. If safety was the issue, why did the RRRD prefer to withhold information while children were playing on the ballfield?

Obviously, a situation of mistrust and deception exists. How it came about is suggested in the RRRD's newsletter: "The proposed Carlyle development is unacceptable," says member Thomas Mitchell, "because it is too big." This is the real issue behind the allegations of toxic waste, and the reason why the group is more interested in the problem of toxins than in a solution. A court case based on the density factor would presumable face tough sledding, but a publicity campaign based on "toxic wastes" would find a wide audience and could eventually block the project. Thus began a barrage of unproved, headline-grabbing assertions that show no sign of abating.

Even if the ends justify the means, is the Carlyle project so big that it will affect Piermont? Past and present Village Boards have wrestled with the scope of Pier projects for more than four years, a period that brought almost 100 developers with proposals to the Village. Of all these, the Carlyle Corp. was judged to be the most responsible and responsive. The agreed-on number of units (252) emerged from compromises between both the developer and the Village, with full public participation. To jettison the Carlyle project at this stage would be simply to turn the clock back four years, and to what effect? To re-start the whole selection process, this time with alleged toxic wastes in the equation.

At an informational meeting held recently at Village Hall, several of the dissident group complained about "hostility" in the audience. Although exaggerated, it is true that a majority of Village residents at the meeting, ecology-minded themselves, saw the cause of ecology being given a bad name. They saw that if the Pier is falsely branded as a toxic dump, something infinitely worse can happen to the Pier--a bridgehead, say, or a substandard development. And they thought: What happens to the value of the houses already on the Pier, not to mention the whole of Piermont, if they are mistakenly perceived as being on poisoned ground?

The issue of toxic waste being touted by the RRRD should be seen for what it really is--one of preferred density not of toxins, and of personal political ambitions, not the environment.

Bob Cone

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WHILE THE KIDS WERE AWAY, THE PARENTS DID PLAY

Above: At the firehouse, waiting for the parade, are Scott Peper, Zoe Berger, and Rebecca Finck.

Below: Bob and Rikki Samuels and Max Rigsby... Joan Hunt and Rod Johnson at the PCA Halloween party.

Photos by Sally Savage.

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Night Beat

Piermont's Police Department in the early 50's. Left to right: Jim Curran, Mayor Rocco Memmolo, Vincent Rafter, Leach deMayo, Sal Juells, Chief Wallace Kyle, John Hickey, Matt Redena, Commissioner John Streppone, John O'Hara, and Bill Stewart.

What's the duty like for a Piermont cop? A recent interview with Piermont Chief of Police Thomas Gaynor got me thinking about that question when I learned in the course of our conversation that 1) the present force is better trained and educated than ever before; 2) Piermont's crime rate is down (82 arrests in 1987 vs. 218 in 1980) though enforcement seems to be sharper; 3) the Police Athletic League established in 1981, which gets kids and cops together for events and recreation, seems to have had a great deal to do with this downturn, and 4) local police spend more time helping people than making arrests and more time taking people to the Mental Health Facility at Pomona than to jail.

But to find out what it was really like on the Piermont "beat" I spent an evening each with Officers Michael O'Shea and Joseph Artrip. What follows are excerpts from my tour with O'Shea (a second report will appear in the next Newsletter):

Piermont Avenue. O'Shea inventories the contents of his police car's trunk, including oxygen, nasal canular, non-rebreathing face-mask, and other first-aid apparatus.

Sennish: How do you guys differ from the ambulance corps?

O'Shea: We're the first on the scene. I'm an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician). That's like a level 3 medic. A lot of times, I ride the ambulance because I'm an EMT. What you want to do is stabilize and transport.

S: Your status puts you above Red Cross First Aide and just below paramedic, right?

O'S: Yes, although I have all that training, too. I've got to check the oxygen tank. We'll turn this on, check the valve. See, we're about full. This stuff gets checked every day.

S: So your priority is help.

O'S: Right. Most of the calls will be service-oriented. You'll get medical calls, you'll get lockouts, you'll get people asking you for directions. That is, in addition to the other calls. Now we also have the binoculars that we use for surveillance. Once in a while there's an accident on 9W involving a truck with hazardous materials and at first you want to stay back with the binoculars because you don't know what you'll be walking into. Now here's a pry-bar, and a bolt-cutter, and the dog-pole...

Motorist: Officer, could you tell me how to get to the Turning Point?

O'S: Sure, 200 yards south on the right side; can't miss it. (To S) Most of the job's like this, directions, medical calls. Criminals? Well, last night--I just finished my paper work--I arrested 3 guys. They had coke, they had crack, they had pot...

S: Where'd you do this?

O'S: On 9W. That's where we're going later. They were in the right turn lane but they went straight ahead. They saw me and got nervous--they almost hit the guard rail. I stopped them, and I could smell that they were smokin' pot, so I got them out of the car. I looked in and saw a lot of pot, and one guy had a nickel bag, and inside the car they had dumped some coke to ruin my evidence, but I used my knife to scrape it up.

S: You have to be careful because these guys might have a heater?

O'S: Yeah, because the drug laws are changing. A lot of misdemeanors are becoming felonies, which means time if they're convicted. But I wear my vest, and we get backup from the Town if we need it.

S: I hear from the Chief that you had a tough situation a couple of months ago. A guy with Florida tags running a light, and he came up on the computer as Dade County homicide?

O'S: Yeah, he'd shot a guy 4 times. So I arrested him, and now he's back in Florida. Came over from Cuba in '81; they have identifying tatoos on them, and his was of a dagger, which indicates that he'd been in jail in Cuba for murder. They also have their jail number tatooed on the inside of the lip.

St. John's Church. **S:** You come here every night?

O'S: We do. We've got to make our presence known because we get complaints about loiterers down here. So we ask them to leave, and normally there's no trouble.

S: So what did you do after you'd stopped this guy for running a light and you went back to the squad car and he came up homicide?

O'S: On a felony car-stop, you don't get out of the car and expose yourself. I turned the PA on and I got out and behind the car and I told him to take his left hand and throw the keys on the ground and then put both his hands out the window and get out the door, and I stretched him out on the ground by 9W and searched and cuffed him. He had a hooker

Continued on page 14

NIGHT BEAT continued from pg. 13

with him, so I got her out and checked her out too. Then Orangetown got there and I took them in.

S: So you were on your own?

O'S: Yeah. They got there, but when they did it was all over. Not their fault. Manpower.

S: How'd you feel - nervous?

O'S: Yeah, nervous.

Kinney Street. S: Is this the route you normally would take?

O'S: Depends on what's going on. It's 8:30. Not too much yet. Later Riverside will fill up. Krackerbox will fill up. The Turning Point will fill up. And the downtown section will be full. (O'Shea's responses to my questions often have the sing-song cadences of a ballad-maker who knows how to record evidence and give testimony.) So I make my presence known out here, to avoid any problem. In certain places, drugs are passed.

S: Then how come you don't make a bust?

O'S: We do make busts, lots of street-level arrests, especially at (a certain place). We don't do more because of manpower. One guy, alone. Everybody knows that. They'll see the one car down by headquarters and go to a parking lot and drink beer and break bottles and pretty much do what they want to do.

S: Why don't you go after the owner of (a certain place)?

O'S: We make referrals to the State Liquor Authority and the owners do pay the fines. We have a lot of fights back there (behind a certain place). What I do is park the police car down the street and come in with my portable so they don't see me coming.

Piermont Place. S: So we're going here for visibility and to check out anything suspicious?

O'S: Yeah, here we have a new house. We don't see any broken windows, the door is closed, nothing suspicious. But we're also looking for fires...we get a lot of alarm calls up here.

S: Seems a dumb place to burglarize...dead end.

O'S: Well, that's a good spot for a burglary because down here you've got the tracks, and tree cover.

Tappan Zee Elementary School. O'S: Everything looks secure. School days, we have two traffic posts up here, one morning and one afternoon. Now the speed limit here on 9W is 40 mph but at this hour I try to be reasonable. Now we go to the stationary mode, turn the light off...See the radar-detector in that car, the little light up on the visor? We can beat 'em with this new radar; it's not emitting radar beams till we get 'em in range.

S: Do you find that when you get somebody at 55 or 60, you also get a DWI (driving while intoxicated)?

O'S: That'll be in an hour or two, 10 or 11. In the last quarter of this year, we made as many DWI arrests in Piermont as the town of Orangetown did for the whole town. We put one car out, they try to put out a minimum of six. And we make as many arrests.

Ferdon Avenue. Having chased some speeders on 9W, O'Shea parks the car on Ferdon Avenue, but is soon in pursuit of a car doing 38 mph in a 25 mph zone. At 9 pm, he gets coffee for us at the deli next to the Krackerbox and lets three kids, just out of the Community Center, operate the car's spotlight then sit in the back of the car before dropping them, squealingly happy, near their homes. Lesson: Good vibes between cops and kids.

Lawrence Park. O'S: Here at Lawrence Park II we get burglaries because the condo's right at the woodline. So they pop 'em and then get right into the woods. At Lawrence Park I, it's very well lit, so mainly the cars get hit. And of course there are domestics: We had a guy and girl living together here who usually fight on Friday and Saturday nights when the bar closes...

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NIGHT BEAT continued from pg. 14

S: The burglaries, who commits them, locals?

O'S: Both locals and gangs from New York City. They'll come up here and case the area, hang out in a bar for a week or two, get to know some people, and work their way through to Upper Nyack.

S: Now it's 10:30 and we haven't gotten one call in the three hours I've been with you. Is that common?

O'S: Last night I had about 10 calls, tonight I might not have any. It's like fishing. Now up here at the Diplomat, we have problems--gun-calls, stabbings, fights, domestics, a lot of drug-related problems, plus car-theft.

S: Why is that? Rentals?

O'S: It's a combination of things. The location, it's right off the highway. So two guys will drive one car in here and take out two. And it's rentals--high turnover. And we do have a lot of illegal aliens. There's a Mexican restaurant across the street, and they work in the restaurant. We've called Immigration, but they say they're too busy.

9W (Parked at right angles to the highway with high-beams on).

O'S: This is a good spot for DWI's. Anytime you stop someone, you've got to have probable cause (headlight out, skewed license plate). If you smell alcohol on their breath, there's a series of sobriety tests you do. If you come up zero on someone who shows signs of intoxication, you take 'em for a blood-test and usually it's drugs. Anytime you make a car-stop, there's a chance you'll turn up drugs. Or maybe a weapon.

S: A connection, eh?

O'S: When these people slow way down and they look at you, a lot of times there's something in the car that shouldn't be in the car.

S: Interesting, though, that they'd be dumb enough to send you that signal.

O'S: Well, take the guys last night...they were also doing drugs. That makes them high and really paranoid.

O'Shea is smart. Last night he stopped a motorcyclist for failure to signal a turn. The cyclist, unaware that O'Shea remembered him from an earlier court appearance, took off down Hickey Street. O'Shea did not pursue him. He recognized the kid, got the plate number, and, figuring the bike's potential at 90-100 mpt on winding streets, decided on the spot that the tickets were as effectively delivered by the mailman as by his own hand. No bank had been robbed, no murder committed. Smart.

S: So a lot of times it's a judgment call.

O'S: Yeah, a chase has got to be worth it...There goes a car without a light over the plate. So we have a violation. We'll check him out. If he's okay we'll send him on his way.

After a few routine questions at roadside to the driver, O'Shea returns to the car and calls in the plate number, and, awaiting the response, asks me if I speak Spanish. The driver is from Guatamala and is friving without a license. An Orangetown police car suddenly pulls up and the officer informs O'Shea that he'd picked up the same guy an hour earlier on the license plate charge and, seeing the lack of a driver's license, issued a warning not to drive.

O'S: But he drove, Bob. Now he won't have an opportunity to drive--at least this car.

S: Could he have misunderstood the warning--language problem?

O'S: No, the other officer speaks Spanish. Y'see? he's talking to him now...I think I'm gonna study it. It would help a lot.

Officer Goldrick returns to our car. He and O'Shea agree that we'll escort the driver, soon carless, back to Diplomat in the rear seat of our car. The wrecker pulls into the school drive. O'Shea gets out and, to my relief, frisks our passenger. A few minutes later, O'Shea drops him off, and we are soon back at the Toro Loco parking lot standing the watch. But not for long: Van with one light out fore and aft. O'Shea issues a warning to the driver but notes that the passenger is someone he'd arrested two years ago.

S: Am I way off, Mike, in guessing at a connection between a driver who is, say, derelict about his car and his passenger with a record?

O'S: Often it all comes together: These people who are doing drugs and are drinking while driving, they don't fix their tail-lights, they speed, they don't lower their high beams...It's nice, though. I often get a favorable response from people I stop for possible DWI--if they're clean. They're glad we're out there checking.

To be continued.

Bob Sennish

Piermont's Police Department today. Seated are Richard Lynch and Ray Holmes. Standing are Glenn R. Brummert, Donna Lynch, Chief Tom Gaynor, and Joe Artrip. Not in picture: Mike O'Shea.

EX-MAYOR continued from pg. 2

property in accord with the law or his neighbor's wishes. Village Board members continue to need the wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job...and fire trucks still have difficulty with parked cars on Hudson Terrace. Bids are still awarded to the lowest responsible bidder and, unquestionably, the Ladies Auxiliary is still welcome to use the Village Hall because, when all is said and done, the ladies are always a great help.

Mimi Bryan