

The Piermont Newsletter

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Piermont Landing — The Home Stretch

When the Millennium arrives, pier development in Piermont will be over, and all the residential buildings will be occupied. On November 21st, the Village Board took action on several key resolutions which will lead to the semi-demolition (or, conversely, semi-retention) of the old factory building (#28) and its conversion to condominiums, removal of the southerly portion of the structure, creation of a new upper-level garden constructed over an indoor parking garage running from north to south, and finally, a three-and-half story residential building (with dormers) built on half of the warehouse structure site (building #41) on the south end of the property, ending at Gair Street.

Given the seemingly endless ups and downs of development on the pier, we hesitate to say this is it, but the actions taken by Mayor John Zahn and the Village Board suggest with a fair degree of confidence that the end is, indeed, in sight. The developers (the same group that has been constructing the condos at the far end of the pier) are convinced they can rehabilitate the old factory building rather than demolish it. So intent were they to gain approval for their broad proposal, they agreed to a number of modifications requested by the Village Board. They will provide indoor parking at a ratio of 2.25 spaces for each residential unit, above the Village requirement of two per unit, thereby insuring adequate guest parking.

Thanks to the demands of Trustee Linda Hacker, the developers agreed to lower the height of the residential structure (#41) to a little over thirty-seven feet.

The present gate house will be slightly repositioned to the east and traffic lanes will be constructed on each side of it. The developers will provide additional landscaping on Village property to the south of Gair Street, screening Building #41 from Ferry Road and Paradise Avenue. Condo residents in #28 will have a pedestrian access, so they will not have to use their cars for a walk into the village. In addition, the developers intend to permit condo visitors to park in unused, but reserved indoor parking.



The major point of contention during these past few weeks has been the number of residential units to be permitted in #41. That large, undistinguished warehouse structure is actually divided in half; the DeVries owners have used the easterly end for parking, while the other end was originally going to be devoted to indoor boat storage. This was part of the original Landing plan which included a public dock nearby, thus avoiding the transportation of boats over public streets. Since that time, it has become clear that no public on-site dock would be constructed. The Village Board believed that a potential developer could litigate to obtain other commercial uses once indoor boat storage was no longer economically feasible — uses which might well exacerbate vehicular traffic and create parking and pedestrian congestion. Given this concern, the Mayor and the Trustees concluded that "a reasonable increase in residential use and a substantial decrease in



Piermont Highway Department: from left, Ray Holmes, Ed Miggins, Al Bartley, Jack Temple, Louie Hurban, Tom Temple. Story on page 3.

continued on page 14

President's Corner

Around the time the original Piermont Landing project was proposed, recycling unused factory buildings into residential space came into vogue. The silk mill on the Sparkill Creek is a handsome local example.

When Roger and Maureen Pellegrini, the silk mill's owners, planned the conversion they were careful to retain the 19th century industrial look of the place. They could have installed smaller, more modern windows and covered the brick with a stucco, but they didn't. They also left the Ferdon Avenue building's oversized doors and steel fire escapes intact. There's no question it's one of the village's handsomest pieces of architecture.

What they didn't do to change the exterior increased the structure's value many times. Artists looking for large space to live and work in away from the city frequently rent the units. Strangers often ask about the landmark 1876 building.

The conversion would definitely win applause from the noted British architect Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe who said, "Architecture is to make us know and remember who we are." The flywheel in Flywheel Park also is a tribute to Piermont's industrial past, in addition to being a wonderful sculpture and jungle gym.

I'd always looked forward to the conversion of Building 28, the hulking old factory building on the north side of the pier. I saw it as another opportunity for the village to remember



what it had been by recycling an unused building. When a developer who held the rights to it said he'd have to demolish it because conversion was too expensive to convert it, I was downhearted.

He withdrew from the project and a new group took over. Their experts told them that they could turn the building into condos at a profit. The news elated me until a few weeks ago when they presented their architect's rendering to the Village Board.

What they propose isn't ugly, it just lacks any distinction. They want to take away the building's robust industrial look that I'd foolishly assumed any architect would fight to preserve. If the current plan goes through, Building 28 will end up resembling the kind of large, bland 1930's hotel or high school that you see in Northern California.

With some of the best views in the world, they plan replacing the huge river-facing factory windows with regular residential windows. The building is to be covered in a neutral yellow stucco, where a brick facade, even a fake brick, would give the it a much brawnier look.

Fortunately, there's still time to revise the plan. Working together, the Architectural Review, Planning and Village Boards could persuade the developers to turn Building 28 into another landmark that helps us know and remember who we were not that long ago. Let's hope they do.

~ Bob Samuels

PIERMONT 2000 SURVEY

Return date extended to

Dec. 30, 1996.

Don't delay!

South Orangetown Bond Vote Wednesday, Dec. 18

Piermonters will go to the polls Wednesday, December 18, from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m., at the Tappan Zee Elementary School, to vote on an \$8.9 million bond issue proposal.

The money will add space to the district's aging elementary schools and pay for needed repairs. If approved, the cost to the average homeowner will be \$45.79 a year, or about \$1 a week, says Dr. Morton Sherman, District Superintendent.

~ Bob Samuels

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Contributors to this issue: Bob Cone, Rosemary Cone, Greg Creedon, Alan Gussow, Karl Knoecklein, Grace Mitchell, P.J. Mouquin, Bob Samuels, Robert Silarski, Martha Schulwolf.

Issue Editor: Margaret Grace



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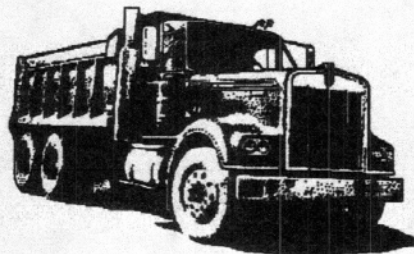
You're finishing your breakfast coffee when you hear the starting signal from the street. You grab the plastic bag, tie it shut and yank open the front door. You sprint 10 meters in record time and take a few low hurdles. You reach the familiar yellow truck just as it stops in front of your house and hand the bag to a player wearing a Dayglo shirt. He takes it and with a practiced arm throws it into the yellow truck. The truck lumbers down the street, followed by the players. Slightly out of breath, you watch them go. The Piermont Highway Department, and you, have scored again!

Playing pickup games with householders who are late setting out their trash on Mondays and Fridays is only one of many chores performed by Piermont's most versatile agency, the Highway Department. Its familiar yellow trucks are everywhere in the Village, as the crews do a hundred things that need doing. They remove discarded furniture, clean up after storms, vacuum the Village's leaves, sweep its streets, open up its drains and sewers, maintain its parks and playgrounds, prune its trees, do its welding, masonry and plumbing, and most conspicuously, plow and remove snow, sleet and ice from its streets all winter long.

With all these responsibilities, it's hard to believe that the entire staff of the Highway Department consists of only five people— Ray Holmes who is acting foreman, Al Bartley, Jack Tem-

ple, Lou Hurban and Edward Miggins. Together they have served the Village for an astonishing total of 91 years. Temple leads with 28 years, Holmes has worked 26, Bartley 22, Miggins 11 and Hurban 4. (There is also a part-timer, Tom Temple.) All of them were born in Piermont and know its infrastructure like a book.

They also know that they are part of a tradition of excellence that goes back to the time when Piermont was a mill



town dominated by the paper factory on the Pier. A number of residents worked at the factory, and had to reach their jobs regardless of weather. The Highway Department had the responsibility of keeping the roads clear of snow and ice— or else. (They were aided by an inexhaustible supply of coal ashes from the boilers at the plant, which, scattered on the street, made for good traction but dirty floors.) Since those days, the Highway Department has continued to have a county-wide reputation for operating in difficult terrain, over narrow streets and steep hills, to keep the Village's roads open during blizzards that have forced neighboring communities to vir-

tually shut down.

Their job at the Highway Department can be dangerous. All the crew have had close calls over the years. Recently, Miggins was broadsided by a car, resulting in a long stay in the hospital. Bartley remembers times when the plow he was driving skidded in the snow and slid sideways down a hill. And the job is never easy. In between their scheduled duties, the phone keeps ringing in the Highway Department office on Piermont Avenue, with an average of 12 to 14 calls a day from residents with special problems that require attention.

What has changed the most during his near quarter-century on the job? Bartley was asked. The big change, he said, has come from the increased number of people. "There is more activity and more trash," he said. "We have to work harder to keep up with it, especially since we have one less full-time employee than we did a few years ago when the previous administration left office. We have to struggle to keep from falling behind as the work load gets larger. We need an extra person full-time, that's for sure."

He looked at the clock on the wall of the office. It was 3:30, about time to quit after a hard day that began at 7 a.m. "But don't get me wrong," he added, looking around. "The people here are proud and happy to be doing what we're doing."

~ Bob Cone



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The First Reformed Church on Ferdon Ave. recently marked the 50th anniversary of its rebuilding. Once hailed as "the proudest church on the Hudson," the previous building burned to the ground in 1944. Even though Piermont was suffering from the hardships of World War II, the entire community gave support to the stricken church. While money was raised to erect a new building, services were held in the Village Hall. In 1946, the church doors reopened.

The commemorative celebration "Open House with Open Arms" was held at the First Reformed Church in late November, and provided an occasion for looking back at the church's 157 year history. At hand were a beautifully calligraphed record of the Reformed Church, dating back to 1834, and Rev. David Cole's History of Rockland County, New York, first published in 1884. Interestingly, several chapters of this history were written by John W. Ferdon, one of the Reformed Church's first deacons.

The Piermont Reformed Church was organized in 1839 by members of the Tappan Reformed Church living in Piermont. Eleazar Lord, President of the Erie



Once hailed as "the proudest church on the Hudson," the old building of the First Reformed Church of Piermont burned to the ground on August 21, 1944.

Piermont Reformed Church Celebrates Its History

Railroad was one of the founders. The Piermont Pier had just been completed. Lord is credited with naming

the village of Piermont, formerly referred to as Tappan Slote. Cole's biographical sketch of Eleazar Lord describes his great successes in banking and insurance. He was educated at Andover and Princeton Theological seminaries. Lord enlisted one of his colleagues, Dr. Cornelius C. Vermeule, to serve as The Piermont Reformed Church's first pastor. Lord's daughter Sarah's marriage to William Whiton in 1845 was the first performed in the new church.

In a letter in the church's archives, Whiton remembered that William Ferdon wanted the church location moved to the Sparkill Creek (where it presently stands), and describes the original placement as follows: "the first church edifice erected for the use of the congregation was of a temporary character and was located on a beautiful slope of ground in sight of the river, just below the hill station of the Northern Railroad of New Jersey". (Note: "Below" meaning "south," maps from the 1840's seem to place the original church in the area that is now Piermont Place, south of Crescent.)

William's son, John W. Ferdon also petitioned the church members to have the church moved to its present location on the Sparkill Creek. (he ultimately deeded the property to the church in 1860). John Ferdon (23 years old at this time)

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contributed his funds and energies to the building of the church on the creek. He was planning his wedding to Harriet Strong — perhaps adding urgency to his interest in the completion of the project. This second church opened for services in 1850. It was a small building, 40 by 60 feet. His election to the New York State Assembly in 1854, and to the Senate in 1855 (he was a delegate to the convention that nominated Abraham Lincoln for President) temporarily prevented his active participation as a member of the congregation. However, he was elected deacon of the church in 1865 and elder in 1867.

By 1865, Piermont was no longer a booming railroad center. The church was feeling the pinch and began to collect funds from renting the pews to its congregation. Each of the 56 families on record paid about \$14.50 a year. In 1872 William Ferdon died, leaving an inheritance to his son John. John contributed a substantial amount toward the enlargement and remodeling of the Piermont Church. The Englewood architectural firm of Van Brunt was hired. From similarities in moldings and architectural detail, it appears that the architects contributed to both the remodeling of the church and the design of Ferdon House on Rockland Road (bought in 1902 by the Mouquin family). In 1904, William Ferdon's house, the grand Greek revival home on Ferdon Avenue, was bought by the John D. Blauvelt family. Both the Blauvelts and the Mouquins continued to be active members of the First Reformed Church, which stood until

the disastrous fire of 1944.

When the church reopened on December 8, 1946, the new building was smaller and simpler than the original church Ferdon helped remodel in 1873. It more closely resembled the original building erected in 1850. The new building was moved 18 feet closer to the road and lacked the balcony of the previous building. Services were

moved from the Piermont Village Hall to the church, even though there were no pews. Chairs were set up in the sanctuary until funds could be raised to install pews. The organ was purchased in 1947, and the church continued its life in the community to the present day.

~ P.J. Mouquin



Trustees Linda Hacker-Toner and Ronnie Hickey happily show off the \$1,000 check presented to them by the Piermont Civic Association. It's for the construction of Mop Top Park, to be built just south of the Goswick pavilion entirely through voluntary contributions. Contact the Village Clerk for details on how you can help. Photo by Bob Samuels



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Catching Up With The Community Playgroup

At the beginning of this school year at the Community Playgroup, three months into my new job as Director of the Community Playgroup, a young woman called me whose name I recognized. She was looking for a school at which she could meet requirements for a practicum course at St. Thomas Aquinas College. When she came to see me, I also recognized her face. She had been one of the wonderful little four-year-olds in my nursery classroom when I taught at the Playgroup many years ago. Past and present had come together in that moment. And Patty stayed with us as a volunteer until she fulfilled her degree requirements.

Much has changed in the intervening years. For example, the Playgroup is now licensed and regulated by the NYS Department of Social Services, and we have an extended-day childcare program. Much remains the same, e.g., the commitment to a child-centered philosophy of education, our strong links to the community, and our focus on cooperation and on the natural environment.

At the Playgroup we pay close attention to each child's goals, needs, thoughts and feelings. We try to figure out what each child needs in order to learn and then decide how we can facilitate that learning. We treat every child with respect and with affection. The staff all understand that children in their early years learn through active exploration and through interaction with other children, with things they enjoy playing with and with adults. We support constructive and

imaginative play, realizing that when children have an opportunity to select activities themselves, they develop skills, work better together and have a good time. Our teachers are like stage managers, planning and preparing a rich learning environment with an ample (though not overwhelming) variety of activity choices. They are like directors as well, facilitating the children's exploration and engagement with the materials, helping them solve problems, make sense of their world, and learn about themselves. Teaching in the early childhood classroom is not about presenting abstract facts to children—facts about shapes, letters, or numbers. It is about acting on the knowledge that play is a child's work, that they can work (or play) intently and have a good time. Our goal is to make this learning process carry them happily through childhood and into their adult lives.

The content of early learning is not as important as the process of learning. It takes trust to believe that through experiences in art and music, with sand, blocks, puppets, dolls and stories, children will learn. Watching children draw, for example, or struggle with wet paints that run, discover new shapes or colors, allows us to learn what they can do and how they go about learning. Only then can we provide information that extends their experience. That is why we have few projects in which children copy a teacher model or practice making the same exact pumpkin, as an example.

A word about working with parents: I believe that a quality pre-school program (and we are one) does much more

than teach the child. Parents and caregivers are affected as well. I would like to see even more of a partnership develop between teachers and parents, a mutual give-and-take aimed at strengthening the child's development. I understand full well that parents are their children's first teachers and the major influence upon the child's life. The staff are what Ellen Galinsky, a researcher into learning in early years, calls "a new extended family." This is true especially in our extended-day childcare program, where a child may spend the larger part of his weekly waking hours.

Our activities include indoor and outdoor play, quiet and noisy times, some initiated by children and others initiated by adults. Children are also free not to participate in any single activity.

We are a private, non-profit, community organization, housed in the Piermont Community Center by the good graces and generosity of the Village of Piermont. We are supported by the Village, by the United Way, the Town of Orangetown, tuitions and the funds that we raise ourselves. Part of our mission is to make preschool child care affordable for any and all; thus fees are based on a sliding income scale.

We would welcome your visit. Just give us a call and let us know you're coming. Our phone number is 359-9174.

~ Shane Burd
Director, Community Playgroup

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Now is the time to save the hillside of Piermont.

One of the unique qualities of our village is its steep hillside. Our alpine mountainside gives us those great river views and spectacular sunrises. As a newcomer to this village and owner of a "house on a hill," I've also learned about some of the other features of steep living; it's much harder to rake leaves uphill than I ever imagined, there's no place in our yard that I could build a garage, and it would probably be impossible to even build a navigable driveway.

My education in hillside living continues — appliance delivery folks balk at the idea of carting a new refrigerator down a string of railroad-tie steps cut into the hillside, but, on the other hand, how many people get to look down at the birds flying through their yard. I'm gradually learning what longtime residents already know — that the Hudson river is a different color every hour of every morning, purple or white or red or green. The afternoon sun on the Piermont Marsh is sublime.

This hillside haven seems to present some less than picturesque characteristics as well, the biggest being that we seem to have more weather. It's windier, hotter, cooler, dryer or wetter. A wind storm recently knocked down two big trees in our front yard. Luckily they missed the house but showed us again how close we live to the powers of nature. We're more and more aware of water, not the River but the water that generally seems to enter my yard from somewhere uphill and leave on its way to go somewhere downhill. During its stay with us it can wash away some of our landscaping or find

its way into the basement and ultimately into the 50 pint hopper of the biggest dehumidifier that Sears Roebuck makes.

The village of Piermont is considering some form of hillside preservation legislation. Not one minute too soon. Before coming to Piermont I was a 10 year resident of Staten Island, New York. Staten Island has faced the disasters caused by out-of-date zoning regulations. Staten Island has some of the highest elevations above sea level on the Atlantic Coast. It has unbelievable views that stretch from the Manhattan skyscrapers to the Ambrose Light Tower miles out into Atlantic Ocean.

For many years the standard "flat land" zoning rules worked — you can build this big and this close to the property line. These rules appeared to preserve the hillsides from over building and the resulting damaging erosion. The problem is that these rules never really protected the slopes and hills. What protected the unique characteristics of the hillsides were two factors: technology and economics. Earlier generations built homes where construction techniques and financial resources would allow. Steam shovels and bulldozers as well as bank accounts were smaller. Only very wealthy people could afford to move mountains.

A quick trip across Staten Island will illustrate what can happen when lots of money meets up with modern earth-moving technology. It is no problem to cut away the whole side of a

mountain. Forget the trees — they are gone in the time it takes to drink your morning coffee. High tech retaining walls allow architects to make houses adhere to the sides of hills that are too steep to walk up and down without grasping for a hand hold. This combination of real estate market forces and earth movers can create a monstrosity that falls within the letter of the law but is totally out of context with the surrounding neighborhood and the ecology of the hillside. The new building may be one story high in the front, but in the rear the marvels of technology may create a building many stories high. Because the fragile topsoil of the bank is stripped away, the water has nothing to slow its travel. Erosion becomes a problem.

Staten Island now has its areas of steep slope areas designated as hillside preservation districts. It is not forbidden to build upon them, but developers and architects must follow guidelines that are designed to protect the existing character of the area. The guidelines require that each lot be considered individually. The height and volume of a structure that may be built are related to the steepness of the lot as well as its area. In effect the three dimensional characteristics of the property are considered instead of just the lot's overall area.

I would encourage the Village to enact zoning guidelines to protect Piermont's wonderful wooded slopes.

~ Karl Knoecklein is a licensed Land Surveyor and a recent arrival to Piermont.

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Consistent with the ways in which computers are changing our lives, perceptions and language, the words *mouse*, *web* and *spider* have multiple meanings at the old Piermont library right now. Of course what comes to mind first is Charlotte and her web, and the legions of mice that have turned up as characters in children's books over the years. But then we also have the literal family of furry things that found its way in to run around the library one afternoon not too long ago when the weather had finally changed to seasonably cold, and the ubiquitous creatures that create endless cobwebs and load them up with insect carcasses of all description behind book carts and between the mullions in the windows, or climb in and disarm the copy machine. Part of the art of running a library in an old house has been learning how to deal with these different creatures. Having a bit of an aversion to some of these things myself, no matter the literary associations, my method in certain cases has been to sit on the desk and phone a kind neighbor for help.

But mouse, web and spider also have new meanings in our language, possibly more familiar to the present generation of students than the older ones above, and learning how to deal with the new meanings has become crucial to librarians working in any building. It is especially so for us as we plan for a new library which has to be organized to accommodate the current and coming information technologies. This also involves some aversion and quite a lot of phoning for help.

Thus in mid-November your librarians attended a day-long workshop



Library Notes

sponsored by the Ramapo-Catskill Library System to explore electronic resources specifically designed for Youth Services. The workshop was conducted by Linda Braun of LIBRARIANS AND EDUCATORS ONLINE, who has a Masters of Education in Computers degree in addition to her Masters in Library and Information Science. Her company guides librarians through the morass of products available and helps to integrate technology into youth services in libraries. The morning session was devoted to CD-ROMS and the afternoon to the INTERNET, and by the end of the day librarians, looking somewhat shell-shocked, staggered out of the New City Library with an armload of product evaluations, e-mail addresses and website suggestions.

The task of sorting the wheat from the chaff is a daunting one. There are new products all the time, many of which are of the "fun-in-learning" variety that is becoming known as EDU-

TAINMENT. This raises many questions. Is it educationally sound? (Have many years of "Conjunction Junction" made better grammarians of American students?) What about the potential for outright plagiarism? Using a print reference source, students at least have to do some painstaking copying of material. But with electronic media, they can just download and hand it in. Believe it or not, they are fooling some teachers. The questions go on and on. Is CD-ROM outmoded? Will everything be online? What happens when the lights go out? Or even, could a careful, slow, and often repeated reading of Charlotte's Web, by a parent and then later the child alone, be more fruitful in the long run than most of the web-crawling?

There are no hard and fast answers, but one bottom line is that students (and often their parents) are increasingly comfortable in the electronic environment and frequently demand it even when print resources are more readily available and possibly more comprehensive. And, of course, there are some truly wonderful resources "out there." We're looking at a new tool for human communication, one that like the stylus, the printing press, or the telephone, is changing human life in ways we have yet to fully grasp. The trick is to learn how to best use it. Our continuing education is an attempt to do that, so that your new library will include the best electronic resources we can provide.

And don't worry — we'll still have books. But I, for one, hope to leave the older literal meanings of mouse and web behind when we move.



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CURRENT AND UPCOMING

December once again welcomes the GIFT OF ART show, now in its seventh year.

Piermont's artistic community has again demonstrated its generosity and commitment to building a cultural center for our village by donating a work of art to be sold to raise funds for the new library. The show will be up through the beginning of the New Year, so please stop by and have a look. And consider giving a gift of art this year, while giving a gift to the community as well.

In February we will be showing the work of South Nyack artist and author Frances Wells Burck. Fran had a successful show at the Valley Cottage Library in October, and will be exhibiting charming small landscape paintings here.

The March exhibit of landscape paintings by Fred Burrell, another multi-talented South Nyack resident

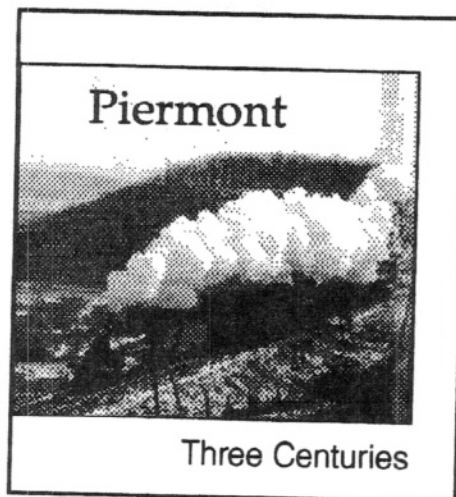
who has been doing plein-air painting with the Art Students League recently, will include work done in and around the Piermont Marsh and the Sparkill Creek.

If you haven't seen the Library's Centennial exhibit as yet, it will be on view at Tappan Zee Elementary School through December. Don't miss it. And certainly, if you haven't yet ordered your copy of the newly revised and expanded history of Piermont, *Piermont: Three Centuries*, do it today! They're going fast. Call for more information if you did not receive an order form in the mail.



REMINDERS:

Library hours are Monday through Friday from 3 to 10 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. Films for children are shown most Thursday afternoons at 4:15, and a schedule is available each month at the Library. We offer public access to the Internet.



Please call for more information on these and other Library services: 359-4595. E-mail pml@j51.com.

BAD WEATHER CLOSINGS: In the event of bad weather, please listen to WRKL for announcements. We will not open if the snow has not been cleared or if it is dangerous for our staff or patrons to get to the library.

~ Grace Mitchell



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On and Off Piermont Avenue:

Pause with us to remember Christmas shopping in Piermont, circa 1986: a handful of charming shops set in a single, sleepy downtown strip, easily and thoroughly traversed in the course of a morning, with time left over besides.

Now fast forward to Christmas shopping in Piermont, circa 1996: now requiring a solid day to review, helped along by the late hours kept by many shops. The business district has doubled in size with the completion of two commercial buildings on the Pier and now displays a greater offering than ever before. With at least something for most everyone, Piermont shopping ain't what it used to be (in a most positive sense), as the following gift-hunting tour will attest.

Ambling down Piermont Avenue from the north, our first stop is **Piermont Pictures Video**. They've grown along with Piermont by recently expanding into a former storage shed. The resulting space now offers more videos than ever—as well as room in which to turn around. Our idea of a great gift is the soon-to-be-temporarily-retired Gold Card: 40 video rentals for \$100. Combined with some movie-sized candy bars, your cocooning-est buddies will thank you all year long. Right next door are the storied **Buttercup & Friends** and **Buttercup's Baby**. A veritable wonderland for children (and their parents). You could cover most any kid right here, in either toys or clothing. Perhaps one or two puppets from their outstanding collection and a snug little plaid, one-piece baby parka will make those long, cold winter nights a bit merrier than usual.

Across the street, **Deja Vu** has given a second life to a charming, eclectic selection of antiques—we particularly enjoyed the handsome harlequins, statuary and architectural fragments, including some smallish (for architecture) angels. A small voice within us whispers that we've seen some of these objects before—in a past life, perhaps? Next door, **Mairéad** ("Maggie" in Gaelic) demonstrates a bazaar-like international bent with an array of goods from the farthest corners of the globe. Of particular inter-

est to us were the festive lanterns—in metal, paper or silk—and the inexpensive seashell rings and metal charms right near the door.

Moving (and thinking) southward, **Aubrey Flowers, Goods and Gardens** made us wish it were spring already. Perhaps some new gardening tools, a topiary or two, and a special notebook to keep track of all that planting to satisfy our green thumb; if you're not so inclined, a "tub tea" will relax joints made weary by the mere sight of a hand trowel. At **Abigail Rose and Lily Too**, the season's watchword is velvet. We imagined that a luxurious skirt, topped by a handmade sweater, accented with an ethereal scarf, and worn over a small something from their expanded lingerie selection could have you and your loved one both warm and chilled all over. **Pixcelation** supplements its stock-in-trade—animation cels—with a stunning array of leather jackets (along with other objects too numerous to recount here) adorned with your favorite cartoon characters and this season's featured redhead: Lucille Ball. Take your favorite little Pooh-lover by Pooh Corner on your way out to stock up on every conceivable object featuring—well, you know.

It's still pretty early—but never too early to think about Christmas cheer. With cheer in abundance, **Piermont Wines & Liquors** offers a distinctive collection of single malt scotches, champagnes and apéritifs specifically designed to ward off winter's chill. Or, for the discerning oenologist in your life, try a set of delicious red table wines labeled with the signs of the zodiac, or a handpainted bottle from Xaviar's (of Piermont) Cellars. And speaking of pretty, **Hair by Cibelle** can fill that bill with every possible service to please the eye and pamper the body. Who wouldn't appreciate a facial during an often stress-filled season? A newcomer (since July) to this stretch of Piermont real estate is the aptly-named **Antiques of Piermont**. With a marvelous array of dinner- and flatware, elegant tea sets and Victorian candleholders (*garnitures* to aficionados), among many other love-to-haves, your (or your recip-

ient's) holiday table can glow with the ghosts of Christmas past.

Next, a stop at the **Community Market**, Piermont's gustatory epicenter. Nestled amongst all the foodstuffs, is a remarkably large selection of infused vinegars and olive oils from California and Italy. Who knows what culinary frontiers can be crossed with an infusion of champagne vinegar or lemon olive oil? Equally arresting is their array of herbal and medicinal teas—for use whether or not you're feeling under the weather.

Zigzagging across a now-busy Piermont Avenue deposits us at the door of the **Harry Lynn Studio**. While Harry wasn't in on the afternoon we stopped by, his windows revealed a fascinating selection of hand-painted furniture which, along with the beautifully carved birds and duck decoys, not to mention the matching swans in the window itself, will no doubt please the Grinch in your life. Just next door, **Boondocks** offers the year's most unusual gift: a live wolf, mustang or whale which, in the holistic spirit espoused by the shop, can be sponsored or, in some cases, adopted via their "Friends of the Forest" kits. Just the thing to keep the kiddies at bay, we'll bet. On a tamer note, charming stuffed reproductions of wild animals are also available, as are Peruvian hemp wallets and other earth-friendly fare. And next door to that, **Abercorn Place** has reinvented itself as a place to discover new and unheralded clothing designers. We were much taken with their apparent abundance of style, as well as the similarity to linen that woven hemp exhibits. Along with a much smaller (but still distinctive) consignment section, Abercorn will outfit you for this holiday season in a fashion designed to be ahead of the crowd.

Heading down towards The Turning Point takes us to **AB Antiques**, where a stunning selection of vintage wristwatches, including some from Rolex and Bulova, remind us of how long our trek is taking. An abundance of estate jewelry spanning the eras from Victorian to Modern reminds us that a metallic "clink" would be a welcome sound on Christmas morning.

An Amateur's Gift Shopping Primer



Continuing on to **America House**, the usual eye-filling displays are highlighted by a colorful series of Calderesque wire sculptures in the forms of pigs, flowers and other fanciful objects. When viewed to the trilling strains of a thumb piano, and softened by a martini rolled your way in a conical glass set atop a small Matchbox automobile, Christmas is certain to be memorable.

A welcome respite from our marathon is found at **Bittersweet Pastries**, where cappuccino and a variety of biscotti fortifies us for the remaining journey ahead. They will ship their three-berry tart—and all their other delectables—anywhere, even to your own front door. The brand-new **Breakfront** offers a wide variety of dinnerware, flatware, placemats and the like; many objects featured here can be considered artworks in their own right. Handmade collectible Christmas ornaments can also solve the age-old problem of a gift for those who have everything. Sharing the front steps with the Breakfront is Goose Cove, soon to be sporting its new name of **Ribbons & Roz's**. A charming collection of Victorian lampshades, a twig basket centerpiece containing ribbon roses, an unusual Christmas wreath and a warm wool wrap from Roz's might be just the thing to spark your holiday spirit. Just to the south is our old standby, the **Tappan Zee Thrift Shop**, where an amazing (and amusing) collection of recycled potential gifts, many in mint condition, are awaiting new lives. Toys of all sorts, souvenir platters, and even a belly dancer's regalia all await a place under a Christmas tree—and don't forget, it's for a good cause as well. Anchoring the south end of this stretch of the avenue is the **Mole Hole (& Kitchen Too)**, Rockland County's exclusive purveyor of ceramic music boxes featuring the endearing "Willie", a tramp who seemingly can't resist trying out other professions. See them for yourself—and don't miss the exceptional crèche just inside the door, or the wealth of kitchen gadgetry upstairs.

A brisk walk around the corner and up the avenue to the west takes us to the warm and friendly **Canzona's Mar-**

ket, where smiles are thankfully free. A fresh coat of paint has made it even easier to discover the one thing you forgot for the holiday feast, be it the holiday turkey, a cornucopia pipe or a canister of miniature M&M's to make your little dickens even sweeter. We'll settle for one of their excellent sandwiches for lunch. Across the creek at **E&F Florist & Garden Shop**, it turns out that the holidays are a great time for flowers, especially centerpieces, wreaths and the like. With a terrific selection of wrapping papers and ribbons and the area's largest selection of trading cards with which to stuff stockings, E&F just might be a holiday must-stop.

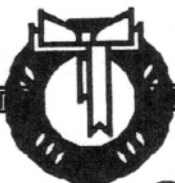
Running more than a little behind schedule? **Piermont MiniMart** on 9W will be there when you need them—as late as 10 p.m. Milk for Santa's cookies, lotto tickets for stockings, beer for the elves! O.K., let them work off the joys of the season across the street at **Diplomat Health Spa**. Coupons for a membership or massage will always be appreciated.

Back now through the lengthening shadows to Ash Street, and to **Decades**, where a nostalgic collection of curios holds sway, from teapots and salt shakers to antique coffee makers. We'd like to spy that original Ford gumball machine next to a 1957 issue of *Life* magazine under our tree, thank you very much. The **Piermont Bicycle Connection**, now in the midst of their Christmas sale, is still all about the state of motion—on bikes and in-line skates, mostly—and how to look good (and keep yourself in one piece) while in that state. We found ourselves inexplicably drawn to a nifty 1950's repro bike, which reminded us of our fondly remembered Schwinn Typhoon. Note to Piermont residents: take an additional 5% off accessories this month. At **The Sky's The Limit**, the faux Dalmatian ear and neck wraps might even warm the heart of Cruella deVil, perhaps preparing her for a warm and fuzzy angora sweater, topped off with a beret or even a derby. With a handful of baubles artfully placed, we're certain that she'll be a new woman this holiday season.

Across the street, several newcomers to the village are currently taking root. Do not miss **Hudson Valley Angler's Supply**, helmed by Cap'n Mike of the *Screaming Reel*. "Gone Fishing" is a way of life here, from bait to tackle to charters to classes to the handful of woodcarvings you'd expect in a place like this. A gift certificate may be your only recourse: we barely acknowledge the existence of fish, but were ready to buy something—anything—just to tell people we had. At **Picket Fences**, give the gift of real estate this Christmas—affordable Piermont real estate in the form of oil paintings of the local scenery. Piermont's largest teddy bear display and a charming collection of handmade dolls—including a cow clad in dress and bonnet—are but a few of the many offerings here. **Millennia** gives its nod to Father Time with a large collection of clocks, both full-sized and miniature. In a similar vein, you might consider a small, slide-sized photographic portrait of either flora or fauna—perhaps for someone you like just a little? If something a bit larger is more appropriate, you'll more than likely still find it here, amongst their large selection of unframed artwork.

As we come down the home stretch in the gathering darkness, a quick stop at the **Riverwaves** salon reveals a plethora of goods and services devoted to delighting the eye and pleasing the senses—both of yourself and of those you love. Hair care, skin care, nail care—it's all here, awaiting a place in the Christmas stocking of a worthy (or perhaps just a needy) recipient. Staggering at last into the **Pasta Amoré Pasta Shop**, we wonder about its veracity—as a Christmas destination—but, then again, what's more Yule-tidey than the Italian flag? With some fresh pasta, sauce and bread for a pre-holiday repast tucked under our arm, we are at last on our way home, secure in and exhausted by the knowledge that Christmas shopping in Piermont is most emphatically bigger—and, in several ways, better—than ever.

~ Robert Silarski



PIERMONT'S HOLIDAY GALLERY SEASON

Alan Sheppard "Experiment in Winter" a changing exhibition of gallery artists.

Piermont Flywheel "Holiday Small Works Show" to benefit the Rockland United Hospice.

Piermont Fine Arts Group Exhibition of works by gallery artists.

L'Atelier Ceramic sculpture by Susan Eisen, western paintings by Joyce Scharf Eichler, and watercolor drawings by Monica Bradbury.

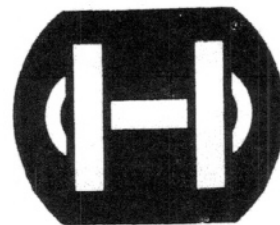
Hudson River Art Gallery Seriagraphs by Thomas McKnight, and Howard Behrens and a selection of wildlife art.

New York Gallery Three dimensional art by Fazzino; works by gallery artists.

Bon Tiner Fine art and prints by international artists; introducing art prodigy Alexandra Nechita.

Happy Dog Original artwork by Lisa Grubb. Special celebrity auction Dec. 15 to benefit T.O.U.C.H.

Art of the Americas Ceramic masters J. Fullmer and L. Marak; paintings of Peru by H. Lecaros.



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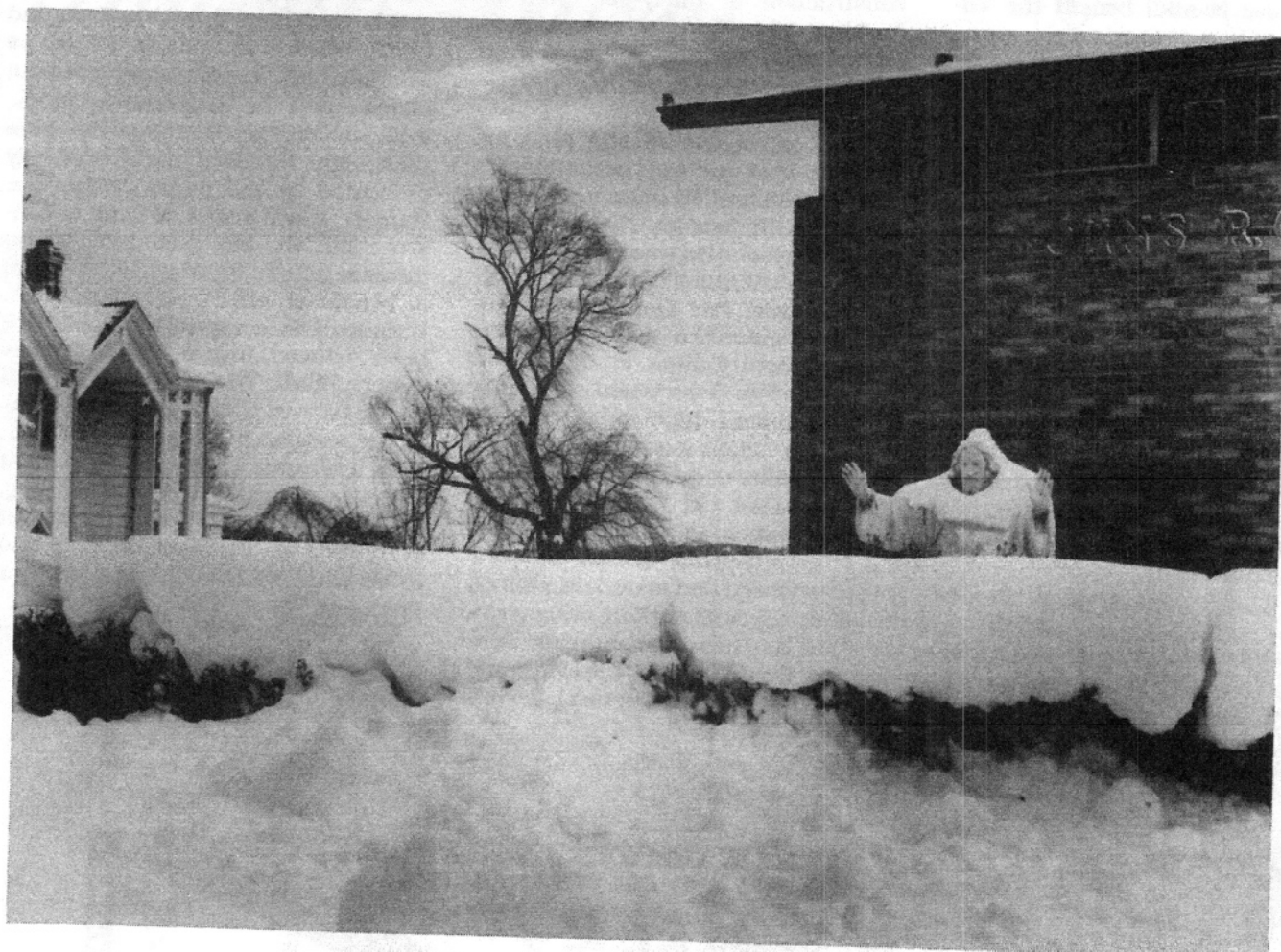


photo by Sally Savage



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DEVELOPMENT continued from page 1

a substantial decrease in future commercial use (would) benefit the Village."

The first resolution declared that the amendments to the local zoning law would not alter the earlier finding that pier development would not have have an adverse effect on the environment, specifically in existing traffic levels, air quality, ground and surface water, noise levels, solid waste production and the potential for erosion or flooding. The most debated aspect of this finding concerned traffic. An extensive study by Lawlor, Matusky and Skelly, local engineers, concluded that the change from winter boat storage (and likely other commercial development) to residential use (even at the agreed-upon thirty-six units) would, if anything, lessen the impact of traffic in the Village.

A second resolution approved a zoning amendment in the riverfront district to 9.1 units per acre from the

present 7.5 units, thus permitting the construction of thirty-six units in Building #41. The figure of 9.1 was arrived at by working backward from the desired thirty-six units.

Third, an amended site plan for Buildings #28 and #41, permitting 83 units in #28 and 36 units in #41 was passed, with Trustee Hickey voting nay. This resolution was formulated in close and continuing consultation with the Piermont Fire Department. The builders committed themselves to a \$10,000 contribution to defray the cost to the Fire Department of training and equipping high angle rescue teams, an action made necessary by the possibility of dealing with a fire in the converted old factory building. This resolution also made clear that final architectural plans, exterior building design and materials, plus all landscaping, final parking design, circulation, and management plans were subject to review by the Planning Board and the Architectural Review Commission.

In the end, with these zoning and site plan changes and approvals, there will be a total of three hundred and twenty residential units on the pier as a whole. While this represents an increase over the last permitted totals, it is considerably less than the more than eight hundred units originally presented by the paper companies. Happily, it will lead to an end of construction on the pier and to an increase in ratables which should have a beneficial effect on local taxes. Because the commercial uses have been reduced, future tourist arrivals may be offset. The need now is for all village boards, commissions and agencies to seek the highest degree of quality in appearance and construction. At the close of the November 21 meeting, Mayor Zahn noted, "We can't all get everything we want. All along we had to do what we thought was best for Piermont."

~ Alan Gussow

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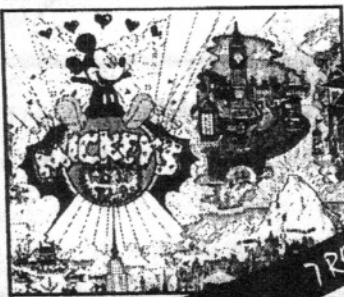
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