

The Piermont Newsletter

VOLUME XXXI. NO. 3

PUBLISHED BY THE PIERMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION

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Committee Study Backs Keeping Piermont Cops

At various times, Piermonters have been beset by doubts about whether they are getting the most bang for their ever-increasing tax bucks, particularly from the Police Department, which absorbs more than 30 percent of the village budget. Skyrocketing police salaries and benefits have focused attention on this arm of local government, reminding some longtime residents of public meetings where overflow audiences debated whether we should drop the police force as too costly and throw our lot in with Orangetown. It was a prospect that the public consistently and heatedly rejected.

The Piermont 2000 Committee, a group of citizens appointed by the Mayor to examine all aspects of

village government, formed a subcommittee on law enforcement. It looked into alternatives to the present police force, their practicality and cost.

The subcommittee interviewed police and civilian officials in neighboring communities and at home, and has just submitted its report to the Mayor. It is perhaps the first time that Piermont has undertaken such a study. Its conclusions show that the village is on the right course with its costly but effective police department, and that relief for taxpayers does not lie just around the corner.

First, the subcommittee looked into sharing the load with the neighboring villages of Grand View and South Nyack by joining them

VILLAGE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE WAY

The 2000 Committee wants your opinion. By the end of October it will be sending every Piermont taxpayer a comprehensive questionnaire on a wide range of village issues.

You'll be asked how you feel about the police, commercial development, pier access, parking and many other issues. Your answers will help guide officials when they make the decisions that will carry Piermont into the new century and beyond.

The replies should be tallied and ready for everyone to see by early next year.

in a single riverfront force. Both communities showed interest, but a letter from Grand View soon raised an obstacle. It demanded
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Piermont fireman Larry Rees, looking like a spaceman, prepares to go in the Hudson as "13 Marine," the Piermont Fire Department's rescue boat, stands by. It was all part of a simulated disaster exercise at the end of the pier involving 100 volunteer fire fighters from 10 Rockland companies. Piermont's bravest supervised the elaborate three-hour drill.

Photo by Fred Burrell



President's Corner

Whether they did it purposefully or not, the 348 Piermont voters who are registered blank (meaning no party affiliation), and the 55 who are affiliated with minor parties, chose not to be part of the process of picking our elected village officials.

Who can blame them for shunning the major parties, you might ask. After all, Republican-Democrat bickering has twice in the past year shut down the federal government, and both parties take shameless advantage of their own loosely written campaign finance laws.

And it's clear that Piermont's minor party members — 17 Conservatives, 10 Independence Party members and nine each Liberals and Right-to-Lifers — are making political and philosophical declarations with their registration.

However, to the Real Politics of Piermont, none of this makes the slightest difference. Although our mayor, John Zahn, is a Republican, we don't actually have a two party system here. The Democrats, with 667 registered voters simply blow away the GOP, who count only 179 souls.

In case you blanks and minor party members haven't given village politics much thought, here's how it works in Piermont: The Democratic caucus, a gathering limited strictly to registered Democrats, decides who will run



for mayor and trustee. Since this is a one-party town, the slate the caucus picks often runs without opposition. In effect, if you're anything but a registered Democrat, you've lost your vote.

Yes, it is true that at times in recent years a group of dissident Democrats, unhappy with the caucus's choices, has successfully run its own candidates under the Village Party label. That's one reason we have a Republican mayor. But, believe me, without the support of many unhappy Democrats who were willing to work incredibly hard, the Republicans didn't have a chance of getting him elected.

If you want to have a real voice in choosing our Mayor and Village Board, you need to become a registered Democrat (remember, you can still vote for any candidate you want in general elections). It's very easy.

The Rockland Board of Elections (638-5172) will send you the forms to register or change your registration. Post Offices and libraries should also have the forms.

Hope to see you next year at the next Piermont Democratic caucus!

~ Bob Samuels

New Faces on the Democratic Committee

For the first time since 1984 Piermont Democrats voted for Committee Members during the September primary. As a result, seven of the eight seats in Piermont's two districts are now filled by new committee members. In District 1, they're Ed Traynor, Jamie Howarth, Dianne Rossi, and Flo Gross. District 33 elected Art Rittenberg, Karen Brown, Greg Toner, and Leslie Stewart. Art Rittenberg is the only veteran member who remains on the Committee.

At its first meeting the Committee chose Stewart, Howarth and Toner as co-chairpersons.

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Contributors to this issue: Bob Cone, Rosemary Cone, Greg Creedon, Margaret Grace, Grace Mitchell, Robert Silarski

Issue Editor: Bob Samuels

Layout and Design: Julie Jackson

Advertising: Marilyn Heitman

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More Pier Pressure

As workers apply spackle and trim to the new "Paradise" units out at the east end of the pier property, much remains undecided about the final piece in the Piermont Landing puzzle. Village officials and developers are still debating the fate of the property nearest the village. It includes Building 28, the massive old factory facing the river, and Building 41, the low slung metal building near Pier Road.

Village officials know there is much at stake. "Throughout the entire project, developers have pummeled successive Village Boards with requests for additional units, 'necessary to make the project viable,'" says, Planning Board Chairman Charlie Berger. "We've been through one financial failure (Carlyle) and want to make quite certain we don't have another."

The original plan for the entire Piermont Landing project called for 252 dwelling units. Before this last proposal came in, the village had approved an additional 36 units.

The developers of Buildings 28 and 41 already have the right to build 83 dwelling units. In their first proposal, they wanted an additional 50, but officials turned them down. Now they're asking for an additional 43.

The Village Board has offered just 30 more units, but stressed that before it grants its full approval, it needs to settle several serious outstanding issues.

Unhappy with just 30 more, the developers are back at their drawing boards, trying to settle design and financial matters that might persuade the village to be more liberal.

Any plan they devise also must satisfy the Village Board's traffic and parking concerns. The proposals already submitted offer much more generous visitor parking than currently exists on the pier. Trustee Fred Devan (himself a Landing resident) pointed out that visitor parking for current Piermont Landing residents is virtually nonexistent, and a constant source of frustration.

The new section's density, and the way it fits in with both the downtown and the existing devel-

opment, are also important outstanding issues. The board wants the project to present a low-rise look from Ferry Road, says Trustee Rod Johnson. It also wants to avoid the "walled village within a village" of earlier proposals.

Fire fighting concerns are another issue. While the buildings must meet fire codes, the Piermont Fire Department worries about fire fighting access to the new structures. The volunteers will need additional training in battling blazes in multistory complexes. The developers have offered to pay for this training.

Worried about rising village taxes caused by the slow progress, Mayor John Zahn is impatient to
continued on page 5

New Pavilion Playground Needs Your Support

Despite its name, Mop Top Park, the new playground being planned for the south side of the Goswick Pavilion, will have attractions for Piermonsters of every age, says Trustee Ronnie Hickey. She conceived the plan.

It will include a bocce court, horseshoe pit, swings and motor development areas or fun stations for kids. Hickey and Trustee Linda Hacker/Toner say we need the playground because the Pavilion

area doesn't offer much for non-ballplayers.

What with the budget squeeze, the Village Board wants to build the facility with donations. They have put a Giraffe scale up in Kennedy Park so residents can keep track of how much they have given.

The trustees are asking you to make your check out to the Mop Top Park Committee and mail it to 478 Piermont Avenue.



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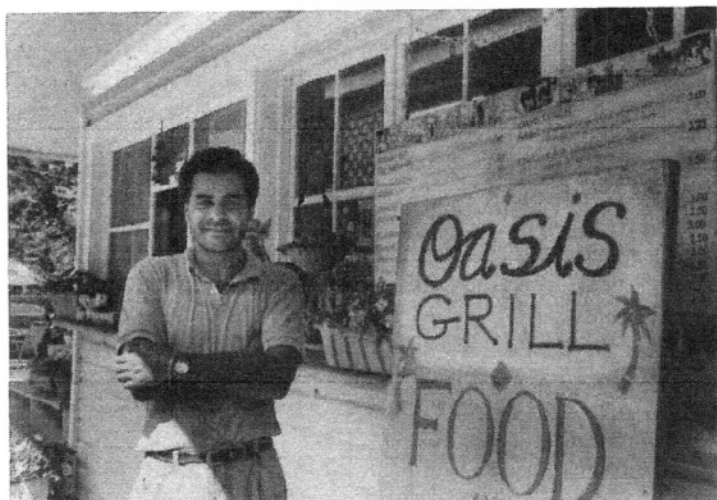
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Stop at the Oasis Grill; Gyros, Fuel and Classic Cars

On a warm afternoon in September we sat outside the Oasis Grill in Palisades, watching the activity as cars pulled off 9W and drivers parked haphazardly near the counter to give their orders, and take their lunch to one of several tables under the shade of umbrellas. The menu offers a



Khaled Elkady offers Middle Eastern food and American standards at his Oasis Grill. Photo by Sally Savage

choice of Middle Eastern and American dishes, prepared by Khaled Elkady, owner-proprietor and chef. Elkady is a young man from Egypt who left home only five years ago to move to Nyack and marry an American.

The food we sampled that day, and on a later occasion, was fresh and appealing. I ordered falafel for the first time, and we also had chicken kabob and a platter of carefully grilled eggplant, zucchini and red pepper with mozzarella cheese. On another afternoon I shared a gyro with a friend (grilled vegetables in a pita pocket), enough for two, equally well-prepared.

Elkady makes Greek salads with feta, cucumber, tomato, onion and olives; a tabouli-bulgur salad; and a combination platter with tabouli, humus, baba (eggplant appetizer), feta and cucumber. The grilled chicken comes with a garlic sauce on pita, as does the falafel, a vegetarian burger combining parsley, tomato, onions and tahini sauce with low-fat sour cream.

All the ingredients are low in fat — healthy foods — fresh vegetables, mostly grilled. They are prepared with a light touch, carefully, on the spot. Were it not for 9W traffic, I should say they are cooked and served in a pastoral setting.

American foods include hot dogs with homemade chili, sauerkraut or sautéed onions; hamburgers with parsley, onions and garlic, served on pita or roll; cheeseburgers, French fries, and a soup of the day.

At breakfast, you can order an egg sandwich with bacon, sausage or ham for \$.99; a buttered roll, or a muffin. Patrons come at all hours. Some spend a good part of a pleasant afternoon over lunch. Others buy for takeout, lunch or dinner.

People walk over from IBM or nearby Lamont. In addition, Oasis enjoys the loyalty of local residents.

Elkady says he has always loved cooking, and as a resident of Paradise Avenue in Piermont he dreams of opening a Piermont restaurant where people could enjoy his food inside or out. He will be shutting Oasis down this fall when the weather becomes too harsh. If he hasn't found a Piermont connection in the next few months, he plans to return to Egypt to visit his mother until he can reopen the Oasis next spring.

He first ran "Top Dog" at the same 9W location, where he cooked all kinds of sausages from a trailer. The number of dogs painted on its outside, both promoting the menu and living up to its name, attracted the attention of passers-by.

There's a good takeout menu available for the asking, with prices that range from \$1.25 for a hot dog to \$3.75 for the chicken kabob or grilled chicken. The telephone number is 365-1320.

Alongside the Oasis is the well-known landmark, Sneden's Landing Vintage Gas Station. You can't miss

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the old cars parked around both sides and behind the station. They are rented for movies and commercials, and the station is often used as is the location itself. Jerry McSpirt is the best-known source of cars of all ages supplied to filmmakers in this area.

More of his cars are down in Edgewater, NJ; but he specializes in cars from the '30's, a few of which appeared on Piermont streets for the filming of Woody Allen's "Purple Rose of Cairo." He is presently supplying cars for a Sylvester Stallone movie and in October will be taking a travel trailer up to the Red Apple Rest for a new Woody Allen film.

He mentioned the other day that many of his cars are English, including Rolls Royces and a '51 Riley convertible.

The ambiance is noteworthy at this roadside Palisades attraction, with cars and vans nestling among the goldenrods of the woods beyond, and happy motorists finding a true oasis in which to stop and buy a picnic lunch in amazingly rural surroundings. As Elkady put it, "I live on Paradise and work at the Oasis—it's nearly heaven."

~ Rosemary Cone

PIER PRESSURE

continued from page

see Piermont Landing completed.

"We have been living with this unfinished project for so long," he says, "and here we have a viable development group ready to finish Piermont Landing. I see the issue not so much about the actual additional dwelling units, but as our making sure that this project gets completed, and on terms that correspond with our village goals.

"The commercial traffic troubles people in this village on weekends, and they are sick of looking at that dilapidated factory building," he continues. "A particularly important feature of the plan for this last phase is that it eliminates the possibility of any commercial use for Buildings 28 and 41."

Meanwhile, at Paradise at Piermont, they have sold 50 of the 82 units. Occupancy of the town-

houses closest to the village (Erie Court) is expected to begin in mid-October, with the next cluster (Cottonwood Court) looking at November occupancy.

~ Margaret Grace



A young couple enjoy a late August day at the end of the Piermont Pier. Photo by Bob Samuels

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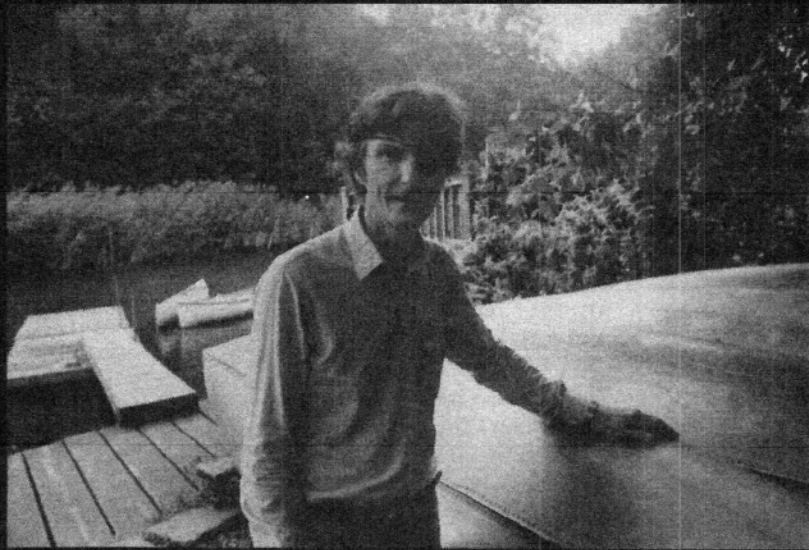
On a Sunday morning, just after Labor Day, a film crew from England unloads its gear from rented vans parked at Bill Herguth's Paradise Boats. Helping movie companies is just part of the routine at this small but flourishing Piermont business which is on Paradise Avenue just after the traffic light.

Anatonia Benedek, an associate producer with Third Eye Productions, supervises the operation, the filming of a documentary with the Piermont Marsh as a backdrop.

Bill, smiling, his good eye flashing, helps load the wooden boat he handmade six years ago, along with some canoes he's renting to the group. Bill's old friend and neighbor, Drew Ciganek, serves as the guide today. The trip will be part of a BBC science show and a PBS "Nova" special.

While all this is going on, a bicyclist from Nyack waits patiently to rent a canoe. He'll be exploring the miles of tiny waterways, such as Crumkill Creek, in the 1,000 acre Piermont marsh.

Bill Herguth's Paradise Boats Gives Paddlers Marsh Views



Bill Herguth has canoes and rowboats for rent for Piermont marsh explorers. Photo by Sally Savage

Bill grew up in the old Piermont, a village which today's new residents wouldn't recognize. "The paper plant, you could smell it a mile away," he recalls.

His grandfather opened the Piermont Garage in 1913. Bill still owns the building, which now houses Piermont Pictures Video and Buttercup and Friends. His grandfather sold Pontiacs and Chryslers and outboard motors in the place. He also worked on the sealed beam headlight, an inven-

tion bought by Thomas Edison. Bill's father worked at the garage too. It pumped gas until 1988.

It was in Piermont as a boy that Bill had an accident with a BB gun that cost him his left eye. He often wears an eye patch, giving him a roguish pirate look. Astonishingly, both his grandfather and father also lost eyes: his dad from a tree branch, and his grandfather from a chip off a chisel.

When he was 12, his family moved to Congers. He kept coming back to Piermont throughout the years, drawn by

the river and the marsh. After finishing high school, he painted automobiles, studying at Rockland Community College in the evening.

In 1975, he moved back to the Piermont marsh, which remains a focus of his life today. In 1990, he started expanding the boat house. It sits next to the house he grew up in. "It was fine for me and my wife Kathleen," he remembers. Then, along came his two daughters, Carolyn, four, and Sarah, two, and the need for more space, prompt-



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ing the construction which continues today.

Bill takes an active part in village affairs. He serves on the Planning Board, the Conservation Committee and the local board of the National Estuarine Research Reserve Commission. The Commission oversees the Piermont Marsh. "The success of the marsh means success for me," Bill says frankly. "We have to share the town with a lot of people," he adds, and he knows it goes for the marsh as well.

He seems certain that people will understand how important it is to preserve this resource once they explore its incredible nooks

and crannies. It is, after all, the largest brackish tidal marsh on the Hudson River, Bill points out.

If you're interested in seeing this great local wildlife sanctuary for yourself, you can rent a canoe (Bill has ten of them) for \$44 a day or \$12 an hour for the first and second hours. It's \$6 for the third and fourth hours and \$4 for the fifth and sixth.

For a rowboat (there are just two), it's \$10 for the first and second hours, then the same rates per hour as for the canoes. Bill bases these rates on two people using the canoes or row boats; there's an extra charge for a third person in the boat.

Call Bill (359-0073) in advance if you'd like to use an electric motor with a row boat. He'll have its battery all charged up and waiting. Paradise officially operates through the months of daylight-saving time, but actually shuts down "when the creek ices over," Bill says.

The rowboat he built is based on a work-boat design used in New Haven Harbor in the late 1880's. With its slightly curved front, it was to row easily in both very shallow and deep water, making it perfect for the Piermont Marsh. Like Bill himself, it has a sturdy, old-fashioned look.

— Greg Creedon

Fall Leaf Pickup Scheduled, Other Cleanup News

The Highway Department will begin picking up leaves the first or second weeks of November. It will stop Dec. 15.

Ray Holmes, the Department's chief reminds residents to rake bulk leaves to the curb and to place bagged leaves curbside. Sticks, stones, brush, clippings or any other debris should be separated from the leaves.

From October until April rubbish pickup is by appointment only, says Ray. Don't bring your recyclables and junk to the village garage. The department does accept spent auto batteries and waste crankcase oil.

Any questions? Call 359-1717 for more information.

Incidentally, the Rockland Solid Waste Management will take a variety of hazardous household nasties at their Pomona facility in October, November and December. Call for dates. Acceptable materials include pesticides, herbicides, household cleaners, paint, gasoline and other awful stuff.

To make an appointment and get more info, call them at 364-2444.

Wait A Minute Mr. Postman

Every so often I feel a bit peevish, a bit Andy Rooneyish, about small changes in the way things are done. I feel that way about having a Westchester postmark on my personal mail to friends far away. Now that they're shipping our out-of-town mail cross-river, our postings don't even have the local dignity of a Rockland postmark. Admittedly, before the change, the mail was processed and postmarked in Monsey — but at least that IS my county. Don't get me started on the absence of even a Rockland SEMI-section in the NY Times.

I remember receiving letters and looking first at the stamp, then the postmark. The name of the town on the postmark would evoke images and memories — fantasies, if I'd never traveled there.

Because I'm so Piermont-proud I want my correspondence to speak of where I'm from when the letter is first pulled from the mailbox. "Piermont - isn't that the little village near the south lot of that huge mall?" Forget it.

Note: Vinnie, our Piermont postmaster says that getting a Piermont postmark on your letters is still possible — just go to the window at the post office and ask for it to be hand-stamped.

— Margaret Grace

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The tourists weren't exactly thronging Main Street in the early 1900s when this photo was taken. — Howard Brawner



Library Notes

We've spent many hours over the last several months preparing for the Library's Centennial celebration. It began September 23, 100 years after Melvil Dewey, Secretary of the Public Libraries Department of the University of the State of New York, signed the Certificate of Registry.

This document is the first official piece of paper indicating the existence of "The Free Library of the Piermont Improvement Association." That's the entity that eventually became the library we have today. While we've turned up references to earlier attempts to form a

library in Piermont, we've been unable to link them directly to the present institution. Nothing earlier appears to have been registered with the state. So we believe September 23, 1896, is the signed and sealed date of our beginning.

To celebrate 100 years of service in Piermont, the Library Board and the Friends of the Piermont Library enlisted the help of many talented residents in launching several projects.

We unveiled the first, in the making for six months, to much acclaim at the PCA's Bluegrass Fair on Labor Day. It is a permanent,



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traveling photographic history of Piermont and the library from the turn of the century. The six-panel display concludes with an architect's rendering of the site plan for the new library. We will build it on the west side of Flywheel Park.

Piermont photographer Sally Savage, who has documented life in the village for 40 years, was the volunteer curator of the exhibit. Paula Madawick designed the show and Davis Crippen wrote the text.

Longtime residents lent their precious old photographs and post cards for copying, and supplied important dates: Sally delved into her files, reprinting and dating many old pictures of our past life. There are shots of many great parades, towers coming down, restaurants burning and churches replaced. Sally even caught a notorious four-footed bread thief on film as he plundered village restaurants in the predawn hours.

Thanks are also due to Marge Bauer, Howard and Ruth Brawner, Fred Burrell, Tom Dow, Erin Martin, Mrs. Frances Pierson, Charlie Samuels, Greg Tavarone and the Reverend John Vandenoever of the Reformed Church of Piermont.

Please call the library (359-4595) for a schedule of where the display will be exhibited or with suggestions as to where we might show it. We need volunteers to help move it.

Also in the visual department: Laura Nugent, an active member of the Friends of the Piermont Library who is an instructor at Fashion Institute of Technology, has made the colorful celebratory banners hanging from the front porch.

For the more athletic among us,

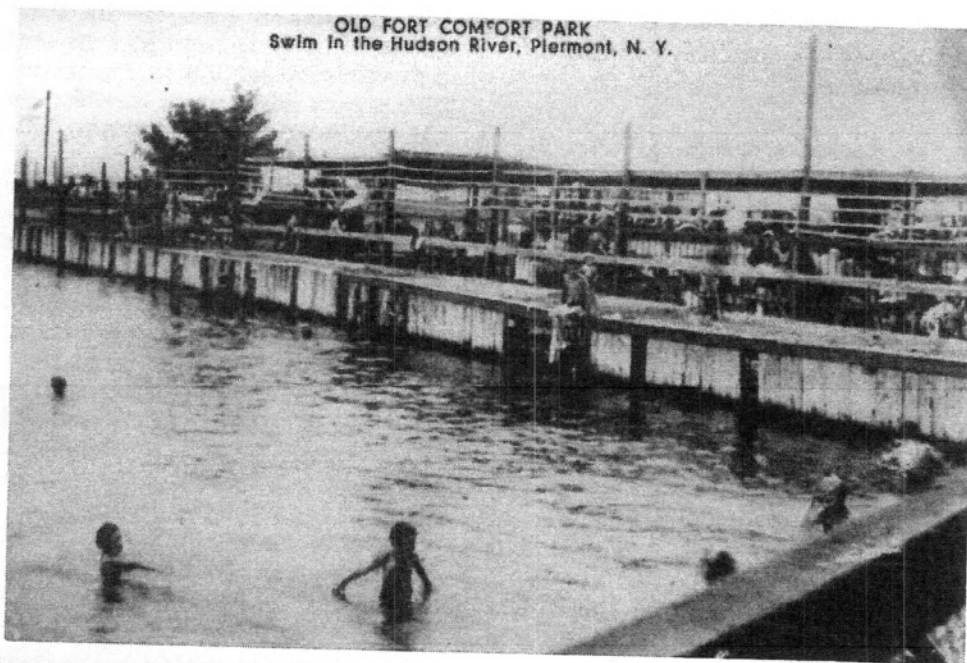
a big event kicking off the year was the Piermont Library Centennial Walkathon, on September 28 to raise funds for the new library. Board member Margie Bauer organized it with the help of Mary Ann Peoples. Thirteen Piermont businesses and organizations sponsored it.

A written history of Piermont from its beginning as a colonial settlement is in the final editing stages and is due to be available on December 1, just in time for holiday gift giving. It's been compiled by Julie Jackson, who began with "A Brief History of Piermont," the out-of-print booklet published in

1976 for the national Bicentennial. She corrected, restructured, expanded and updated this, using original documents, old papers and other materials sequestered away in many dusty corners of the library.

Amplly illustrated with photographs lent from local collections, it will be an important contribution to our understanding of where we have been. As someone quotable once said, that's vital to an understanding of where we are going. We expect to sell out the initial edition of 2,000 quickly, so get your copies early!

continued on next page



The Old Fort Comfort Park, site of the present Piermont on the Hudson Restaurant and the adjoining marina, was a popular resort back in the old days. Both photos are part of the Piermont Library's centennial traveling exhibit.

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Special Program
How To Buy a Personal Computer
Friday, Nov. 8, 7:30 p.m.

The gift giving season approaches, and personal computers are likely to be on many lists this year. Last year, for the first time, more computers than television sets were sold, and the trend will probably continue. In a lively 90-minute seminar to be held in the Fellowship Hall of the Reformed Church, Verne Becker will explain in simple language how the various components of a personal computer work, and what you should know in order to make a wise PC purchase. There will be plenty of time available to answer your questions.

Mr. Becker, who lives in Piermont, teaches computer applications at Bergen Community College. He is also a professional writer.

And last, but by no means least, the theme of the Piermont Civic Association's annual dinner in March will be the Library's 100 years in Piermont.

Thanks go out to all the people who have given and will give of their time, funds, and expertise to make this celebration possible. Because of people like these, the library, which a voluntary group of citizens started to enrich the cultural life of a small village in the 19th century, is now looking forward to an exciting new century of greater service in its new Flywheel Park home.



UPCOMING EVENTS

**Art exhibits at the
Library this fall:**

In September, **LANDSCAPES OF TWO COASTS**, a show of paintings in oil by Muriel Henriques, brightened our upstairs hall gallery. Muriel came to New York from her native California in the 1940's to study at the Arts Students League, later earning a Masters from NYU. After a hiatus of many years during which she raised a family, in the 1980s she returned to San Francisco and resumed painting. She has come back to the East Coast to be near her children and has recently settled in Piermont. She is now doing work inspired by the landscape of the Hudson Valley.

In October we show **SELF PORTRAITS**: Portraits by John Vandenoever. John has been the pastor of the Piermont Reformed Church since 1988, but he is also an artist and a musician. He studied art at Queens College from 1986 to 1991 and has had exhibits of his work in New York City, in Rockland County, and in Thorpe, England. His show will include paintings in oil, drawings and assemblage.

November's display grew out of the work on the Centennial display and history of Piermont done this year. Photos **FROM THE COLLECTION OF GREG TAVARONE**, who has done an important job in locating and copying old photographs of Piermont that were used in both projects, will be on exhibit here. Greg is an accomplished photogra-

pher with great enthusiasm for preserving local history, and these pictures are fascinating. Don't miss them!

It's kind of hard to believe, but in December we will have the **SEVENTH** annual **GIFT OF ART** show. It really does seem like just yesterday that I sat down to write the first letter to artists who had exhibited here over the past few years. I asked them for a donation of a piece of art to sell at a Holiday Open House to raise funds for our new building. Now, these many years later, we are on the brink of beginning the new building, and the **GIFT OF ART** show is still going strong.

Many of our loyal participants have gone on to join galleries and exhibit successfully widely. However, they continue to generously give to the library and its community in this way. We will hold the **OPEN HOUSE** on Sunday, December 8, from 3 to 5 p.m., and feature the famous hors d'oeuvres made by Library Board members. Please plan to join us for some holiday cheer — and think about giving a gift of art this year.



REMEMBER: the Library has two personal computers, one with an Internet connection (pml@j51.com), a copy machine, and a fax machine (365-1423), all available to the public. Hours are Monday through Friday from 3-10 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 1-5 p.m. For more information, please call 359-4595.

~ Grace Mitchell

KENNETH B. SVENSSON, M.D., P.C.

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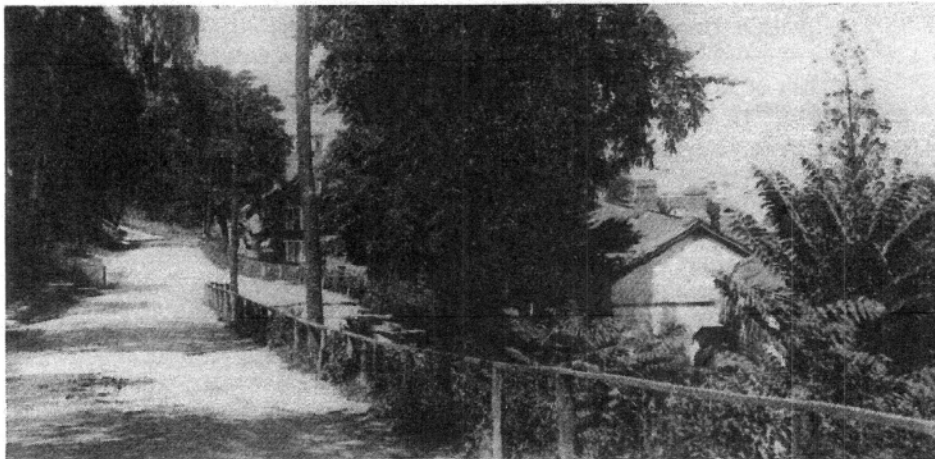
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At the turn of the century, Ash Street, top, coming down from the railroad station, looked very much as it does today. However, Piermont Avenue, bottom, then lined with with closely spaced trees, was much more pastoral. Both photos will be part of the Library exhibit and are from Greg Tavarone's collection.

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COMMITTEE STUDY

continued from page 1

that the cost of the proposed force not be based on assessed property values but on some other yardstick, like the number of roads patrolled or the number of calls made. From the subcommittee's perspective, this demand, which heavily favors Grand View taxpayers, would be unfair to the other villages. The report calls it "a virtually insurmountable problem."

Another problem is terrain. With most calls coming from downtown Piermont to the south and the Franklin Avenue/Cedar Hill and Nyack College areas of South Nyack to the north, the distances between these venues seemed too far for a small force to effectively cover.

Another obstacle concerns the headquarters. Each village would probably want it, but neither now has a police headquarters large enough to accommodate a bigger force without being severely stretched. So the combined department would soon need an expensive new facility.

The subcommittee also judged that while Grand View and South Nyack are almost completely developed and have limited available acreage, Piermont has large tracts of raw land on 9W that may eventually add to its tax ratables. The result could be that Piermont subsidizes the other villages because of its higher income from taxes, without getting more police presence in return.

After studying the possibility of a unified police force between Piermont, Grand View and South

Nyack, the group concluded that "such a riverfront police department would not be feasible."

Merger with Orangetown Police Department

Another scenario emerged as the subcommittee looked at the implications of a merger with Orangetown's Police Department. (Piermont, like every village in the State, has the legal right to disband its police force anytime. Then, Orangetown would automatically take over.)

In conversations with Orangetown Chief Homer Wanamaker and Captain Kevin Nulty, the subcommittee sought to learn how a merger would impact Piermont. If there was a merger, the officers said that they would suggest that Orangetown create a new patrol area. It would have six or seven officers and include Piermont and other areas. They would recommend a patrol car, but they gave no assurance that it would be in or near Piermont at any given time. They would assign patrol personnel out of Orangetown on a rotating basis.

The officers said they'd recommend assigning a community police officer to Piermont who would address the specific needs of the community. However, there would be no manned substation, unless Piermont provided a room for occasional meetings or interviews, and no assurance of a foot or bicycle patrol. They stressed that although they would recommend these things to the Town Board, only the Board could authorize the budget for the new

patrol area. There was no guarantee of additional personnel and equipment.

Asked to be as specific as possible about the coverage that Piermont could expect under such an arrangement, the Orangetown officers conceded that they always send police personnel where they need them most. Piermont could wind up getting fewer patrols than higher-crime areas in larger communities, like Nyack and Pearl River.

The officials warned that new areas could require more police attention than Piermont. They pointed to increased traffic and commercialization along the Route 303 corridor and development on large tracts like the Magee property, Flintkote, Volkswagen and the former Rockland Psychiatric Center. All these, when developed, might siphon police coverage from more trouble-free areas like Piermont.

The subcommittee then met with Kenneth Flatto, Orangetown's Director of Finances. It wanted to learn what Piermont's police costs would be under a merger compared with what they now are.

Piermont's current police budget is approximately \$750,000. That amounts to \$1,221 a year for a house assessed at \$300,000. If Orangetown took over the police, the cost to the owner of the same Piermont house would be \$875, representing a tax savings of \$346, according to a follow-up letter Flatto sent the subcommittee.

However, his figures are based on the Town's budgeting \$650,000 for a new patrol area, not the larger amount actually spent by Pier-

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mont. If Orangetown's hypothetical outlay is increased by \$100,000 to match Piermont's actual expense, the tax savings for the owner of the \$300,000 Piermont house sinks to \$210.

Recommendations

The subcommittee judged that the question of giving up the certain benefits of Piermont's locally-controlled, full-time police presence for an uncertain, anonymous future with Orangetown was virtually a non-issue.

"Simply stated," the report reads, "to disband a police force which recognizes the community and the community's needs and is a constant presence in the area, for a savings of approximately \$200 to \$350 per household, does not seem to be a good investment."

To cut Piermont police costs, the subcommittee suggested using more part-time officers during festivals, fairs, carnivals and summer weekends, plus a civilian patrol on a volunteer basis. For example, the patrol could advise visitors of parking rules and regulations, chalk-mark tires of violators who overstay their permitted parking time, and check cars on the pier

for permits.

It also suggested that the merchants take over their own security needs, as is done in shopping malls, by employing private security personnel to patrol the parking lots and help visitors. When we need extra police for special events, it suggested that the village require the groups sponsoring those events to pay for the police overtime or to provide private security and parking patrols.

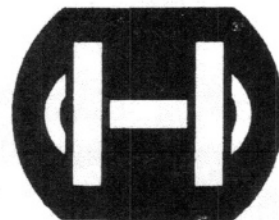
Finally, the police subcommittee recommended that the Mayor establish a commission or review board. It would meet regularly with the Police Chief, to insure that there is no unnecessary overtime and that his officers properly cover all areas of the Village. It did not mean this suggestion as a reflection on the Chief, who is doing a very professional job. The report said it would free up additional time for him to handle other matters and have a greater presence on the street.

The police subcommittee members included Lynn Boone, Robert Cone, Ken Melia and Marjorie Smith. The chairman was John Gallucci.

~ Bob Cone



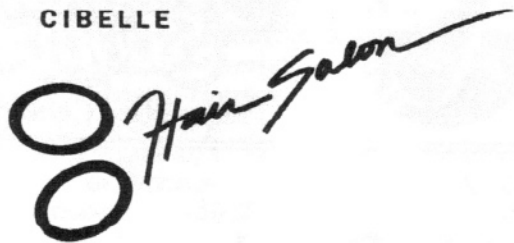
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A View From The North

As a former Piermonter now residing quite happily in Nyack for more than a year, I find myself in a curious situation. Although I'm in downtown Piermont for one reason or another nearly as often as I was when I lived there, I sometimes feel as though I'm a half step off to the side of Piermont's powerful collective psyche. It's an interesting position to inhabit, offering as it does a degree of objectivity, and has sometimes led me to ruminate on what I miss most about Piermont:

- *Ferry Road and the Marsh:* Two places that cannot be duplicated in terms of providing a clear idea of what a "river town" means, and that require vigilant attention to maintain.
- *A cohesive Main Street:* Pier-

mont Avenue where, by accident or by design, a near-complete agglomeration of buildings and shopfronts exist that, with remarkably few exceptions, actually relate to one another architecturally and make up a whole far greater than the sum of its parts.

- *The Community Market and Cafe Portofino:* It's not that I don't use them now, it's just that I can't walk to them. And that, to me, is well worth missing.
- *A relatively complete absence of anonymity:* Having a walk into town become an hour-long digression with friends and acquaintances wreaks havoc on the schedule, but is good for the soul.
- *Knowing most of the cops in*

town by name: A comfortable atmosphere of security that is increasingly rare across the country.

- *Solitude:* The nearly complete absence of human-generated sound on one of Piermont's back streets, late on a weekday summer evening.

That said, the natural follow-up would be what I don't particularly miss about Piermont:

- *The buildings at the Landing:* Observing on a daily basis Nyack's near-textbook example of what not to do in a pier development has only heightened my interest in the remaining possibilities inherent in the Landing and increased my disappointment in how little advantage to date

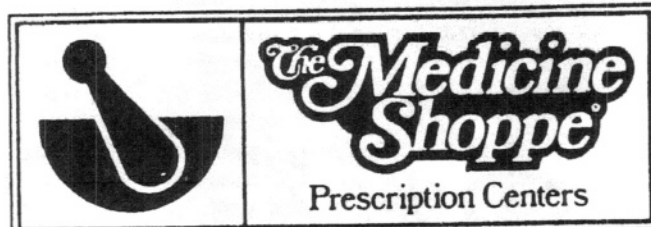
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