

Happy Birthday Piermont

1850 - 2000

The Piermont Newsletter

VOLUME XXXV NO. 1

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MARCH 2000

Village Borrows Big To Pay Bills

The Village Board, suddenly discovering that Piermont is not living within its \$2.5 million budget and is almost broke, has voted unanimously to borrow \$341,450 so that the village can continue to meet its payroll and pay its other bills. The dramatic crisis also revealed long simmering differences between the Mayor and his former budget officer.

Mayor Dennis Hardy mostly blamed the fiscal mess on tropical storm Floyd, which devastated Piermont last fall. Trustee Fred Devan, who the Mayor dumped as budget officer February 1, said bad management and lax record keeping caused the problems.

"I think it's extremely important that we all agree that we have to have the tools necessary in the future to get a little bit of a handle on what our finances are," Devan said before the vote. "If we don't, we're going to be repeating ourselves like the movie 'Groundhog Day.'" But both the Mayor and Trustee Ed Traynor, his deputy, say those problems are almost over.

The Mayor, critics charge, had switched the time for the

potentially embarrassing meeting, hoping that no one would attend. Originally, the unusually light, two-item agenda for the February 29 session called for a routine review of the police budget and a labor negotiations update. Ho-hum, even by village government standards.

But at 2:28 p.m. that day, everything changed. The village clerk was told to add a murkily worded

new item, "Resolution Authorizing Budget," and to shift the meeting from 8 p.m. to 7 p.m. The new agenda was posted on the Village Hall bulletin board, but none of the people who had been sent the earlier version were told of the change. At the last minute, however, a few discovered the switch.

When the Board was challenged about it, Village Attorney Ray Ico-

continued on page 13



Moon Over Piermont. Photo by Fred Burrell

President's Corner



An era has ended in Piermont. For the first time in more than 60 years, the Fourth of July weekend will pass quietly here without a carnival or fireworks. To most kids and some adults, it will be as sad as if someone canceled Christmas. But Police Chief Tom Gaynor, his men and many other Piermonters will miss the yearly four-day beery bash about as much as they'd miss another tropical storm Floyd.

One of the first people I broke the news to leaped immediately to the conclusion that "it was those new people on the pier that had it stopped." That says something about how many of us distrust and suspect strangers. It, sadly, is nothing new here, but it's 2000 now, not 1900, and we finally need to get over that.

The truth is it was the firemen themselves who decided to end it because they had trouble getting volunteers to do the work. It's tougher than it once was to find folks willing to give up parts of a holiday weekend for a fundraiser. That same difficulty has forced the Piermont Civic Association to cancel its annual Labor Day Bluegrass Festival.

The Fire Department had been using the approximately \$10,000

it makes from the carnival to pay for its Inspection Dinner. Each year it invites all the members, their significant others and some officials to watch new officers installed at the event. Coincidentally, the village has been spending \$10,000 a year in police and Highway Department overtime in support of the carnival and fireworks. The Village Board voted unanimously to give that money to the Fire Department so it can continue the dinners.

My memories of the carnival stretch all the way back to the late 1940s when my parents, afraid because of a polio epidemic, stopped my sister and me and from going. More recently, I was a regular at a friend's annual Fourth party up on Orchard Terrace. She'd invite a bunch of us to watch the fireworks. The trouble was that from her porch you could hear them fine although you couldn't actually see them.

But she's a most gracious and generous hostess and so for years no one mentioned that little difficulty. Then one night, after a few too many drinks, a guest told her, "You know, this is like fireworks for blind people." Soon after, she stopped throwing the party.

I miss those get togethers and, in some ways, I'll miss the carnival

and fireworks too. Yet, it sure will be nice not having our village packed with that the sometimes-rowdy crowd. I'll also enjoy coming home on that weekend without having to explain to a stern-faced sheriff's deputy that we are indeed genuine Piermonters.

Most old-time Piermont residents can't remember a time before the carnival. Mayor Hardy is one of those. "I'm not sure what I'll do July Fourth without it," he told us a little wistfully. He's not alone.

~Bob Samuels

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Editor: Margaret Grace

Contributors to this issue:
Marjorie Bauer, Fed Burrell,
Greg Creedon, Joan Gussow,
Grace Mitchell, Bob Samuels

Advertising: Marlene Sanders



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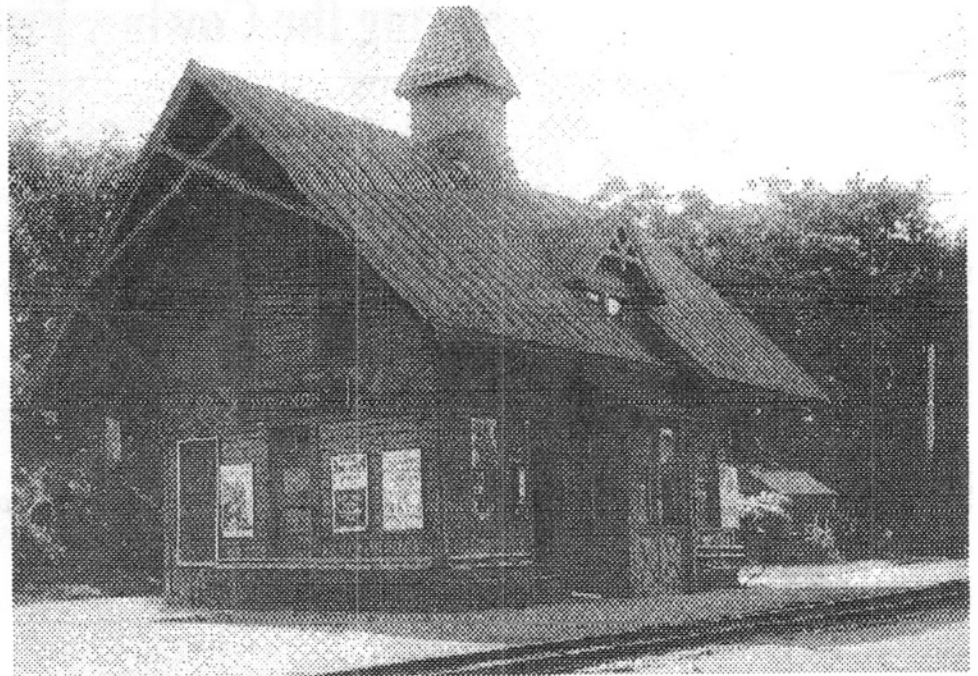
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Editor's Desk

*Happy 150th Birthday
Piermont!
Let's give ourselves a
present!*

The Piermont Railroad Station would do nicely. In February the Village Board passed Trustee Rod Johnson's resolution declaring its purpose and intent "to acquire and dedicate the Property as a municipal park and to preserve the Station Building as a structure of local architectural and historic significance..." Its preservation can't happen fast enough. The station's dreary gray siding, unkempt yard and darkened windows make this historic building look as though it's literally fading away.

Piermont's railroad heritage is significant—we were the first Hudson River center with railroad service to Albany and Western New York State. The station house, now #50 Ash Street, was constructed in the early 1900s to accommodate trans-state travellers as well as local commuters. In 1966 Erie Railroad stopped running in Piermont altogether and the building was deeded to the Piermont stationmaster, Mrs. Belle Kelly for use as a private home. It was later occupied by her son Tom who lived



there until his death in 1997. During that time Tom "secured his borders", and seriously discouraged trespassers in the form of hikers along the Erie Path, who now detoured at Ash Street, rejoining the path behind the library. Tom Kelly left no apparent heirs, so the future of the property will be in the hands of New York State Probate Court.

It is the intention of the board's resolution to make a case to the state that the highest and best use of this property lies with the Village of Piermont. The Board's resolution also states that acquisition of the station is consistent with the

Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, not only because of its historic significance, but also because it is in the public interest to fill the ownership gap created by the station property on the Erie Path, which is a public park that runs from Sparkill to South Nyack along the old Erie trackbed.

When will New York State release the property for sale? At what cost? Both questions are unanswered as of now. But the Village Board has made a wise move in going on record with its interest and intent. Lets hope we're not too late.

—Margaret Grace

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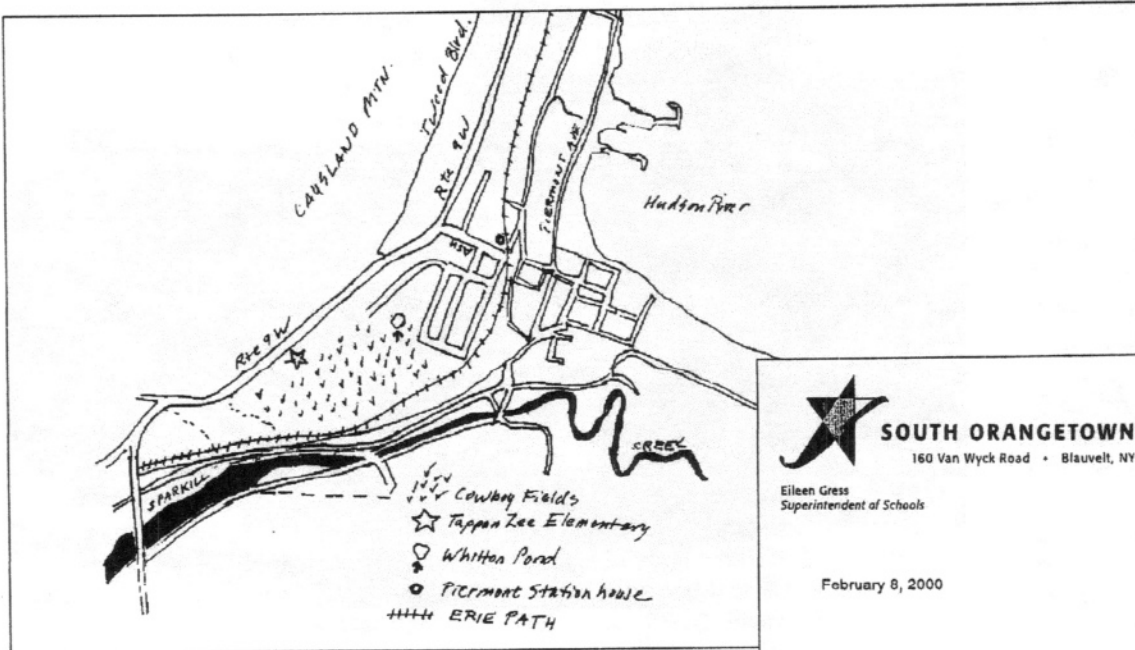
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Saving the Cowboy Fields



Within the Village of Piermont, sloping uphill between the Erie path and the Tappan Zee Elementary School, lies a wild tract of land whose existence is unknown to many of Piermont's newer residents and whose walking paths are accessible only to those who know the entrance. Accented with 100 ft tulip trees, fairy-tale forests of black locusts, and stands of pin-oak and sassafras that flame scarlet and gold in the fall, the tract called The Cowboy Fields* also boasts a bubbling brook, clumps of ferns and wetland sedges, beds of sphagnum moss, and even a field of daylilies. There are companies of birds, vernal pools, and little Whiton pond has benches for duck watching. It is a place to dream in.

Out of the sight of most villagers of late, this extraordinary tract of wildland has inevitably tempted development over the years. But villagers familiar with the site have long believed that it was destined to become a park.

Last year alarms were set off by

circulation of a sketch that showed a road that began on the Village-owned Erie path and ran through the Cowboy Fields all the way up to 9W, bordered by 20 townhouses, a dozen or more single family dwellings and seven "skyline" estates.

Just about the time that the map began circulating, County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef announced a plan to use County funds to preserve "environmentally sensitive land" parcels nominated by Rockland citizens. Several Piermont citizens already concerned about the Cowboy Fields, sent in recommendations explaining why this plot should be among the lands considered. When the *Journal*



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Eileen Gress
Superintendent of Schools

February 8, 2000

Mr. Daniel Sherman
33 West 17th Street, Suite 9 West
New York, NY 10011

Dear Mr. Sherman:

In response to rumors that the South Orangetown School District may be considering selling or developing the open space portion of the school property in Piermont known as the Cowboy Fields, it can be known that the School District has no such intentions. The school district feels this is in the best interest of the community.

We have had a request by the Division of Environmental Resources to initiate a review of the Cowboy Fields for possible acquisition of the property into the Rockland County Open Space Acquisition Program. The Board has indicated its interest in an initial exploration. However, it is not committed to selling the property at this time.

I am delighted that the community is pleased to know of our commitment to the Cowboy Fields. We look forward to working closely with the community as we move forward.

Sincerely,

Eileen Gress
Eileen Gress
Superintendent of Schools

EG:jc

c: BOE

News announced the nominations in February, Piermont's forest was among them.

The 40 acres in question have been the property of the South Orangetown School District for decades, although there was a time in the early 80's when there was a threat that school properties would be sold and 250 units of housing built on this site. Learning last year that Piermont

landscape architect Dan Sherman had contacted the PIP to seek their help in preserving the the land. School District Superintendent Eileen Gress recently took the trouble to officially squash rumors of an impending sale. (see letter) The school district has no interest in selling the Cowboy Fields property for development, she told Sherman, "feeling that this is in the best interest of the community."

Meanwhile, several members of the Village Board have expressed willingness to consider using some of the tax money that will flow to the village on completion of the pier development to help acquire the Cowboy Fields as a park. The last time a large open space—the pier—became available in Piermont, the village could not afford to acquire it. There would be a kind of happy justice in using part of the taxes that loss has generated to preserve what is the last large open tract of land in Piermont. Quite suddenly, it begins to look as if town, country and village funds might be combined to preserve this beautiful piece of land for ourselves, our children and their children.

But for the County to take an interest in preserving a property, there must be widespread community interest in its preservation, which means that the Cowboy Fields need to be more widely known by Pier-

mont residents beyond the adults who played there as children and the hikers who have already walked there. Your chance is now. In April, in celebration of Earth Month, Grace Mitchell will mount an exhibition at the library featuring the first real "map" of the area with access points and sites of interest noted. For those who would like to visit Cowboy Fields on the ground, a self-appointed Piermont Conservation Committee is hoping to organize a series of weekend walking tours led by villagers who can identify various trees, plants, birds and other wildlife of this very special plot of land. Stay tuned.

~Joan Gussow

Editor's Note

HOW THE COWBOY FIELDS GOT THEIR NAME (SOME SPECULATION)

Cowboys rode the trails into the fields behind the elementary school property as recently as the mid-nineteen eighties. I remember them cantering by on Sunday afternoons on south Piermont Avenue.

The riders were members of the Interstate Cowboy Club of Sparkill. They rode out of the stable behind Bob Pierson's house—a place once surrounded by a split-rail fence (now surrounded by a subdivision) across from what is now the Mountain House Tavern. The organization was founded in the late 1940's by Bill Secor of Nanuet. The club boasted as many as 75 members at times, and had a junior division of more that 30 younger riders. The Interstate Cowboys raised funds for charities by holding horse shows in Sparkill, and having an occasional rodeo at Bills large corral in Nanuet. The groups disbanded a decade ago, and while members Pat Yandanza and his wife Mollie of Sparkill say otherwise—it's the Cowboy Club's riders that I associate with the name Cowboy Fields. Bill Hickey of Piermont, whose wife Ronnie was a junior member, attributes the name Cowboy Fields to the fact that for decades the wooded acreage was the favorite place for local kids to play "Cowboys and Indians".



Pat Yandanza (second from left) presides over an Interstate Cowboy Club meeting in the Pierson's Sparkill barn, circa 1960. The mural is a discarded Chrysler Motors Corp. billboard from their "1000 Horses" ad campaign.

Piermont Election 2000

Have you grown weary of the hyperactive national presidential race? Welcome to the polar opposite - Piermont's local contest lot for two trustee positions. Voting will take place on election day, March 21, but, as often happens in Piermont, that contest will be "no-contest". Here's why.

Piermont's candidates are chosen by the caucuses of its various political parties. If the caucus winners run unopposed by independent candidates, a win at the caucus means a win at the polls. What about a battle between political parties? For the most part, issues that define Republican and Democratic parties at a national level are not the issues that drive village politics. When there is a contest, it's about very local concerns - taxes, development and, well, taxes.

Piermont has been a Democratic party stronghold since its early factory days. Its caucus is the first held each election year. This year, as is often the case, the candidates who won the Democratic caucus, sought and won the endorsement the Republican Party. With no challengers from Republicans or Independents (Village Party), their election is pro-forma. So in this election year 2000, with 67 people voting at the Democratic Caucus, and 12 at the Republican Caucus, our next two village trustees are chosen by 88 caucus-voting resi-

dents in a village with 874 registered voters.

The Democratic caucus itself did have some surprises. While word was out in advance that Pier resident Curtis Lowey and democratic activist Jamie Howarth would seek the trustee positions, a third candidate came forward - Elise Knight, nominated by Pier-

Voting takes place at Village Hall on election day, March 21, from 6 am - 9 pm, Flex those muscles of democracy and vote!

mont Mayor Dennis Hardy. Elise, a vocal critic of bicyclists and traffic on Piermont Avenue, lost at the caucus. Asked if she would run as an independent, by *The Journal News* Elise answered "no", concerned that that she would have to compromise her positions if she became part of the ruling party. Elsie if also deferring to a very busy professional acting schedule. (Yes, that was Elise in Law and Order, playing a Russian prostitute—she was terrific).

Our Candidates

Trustee candidate Jamie Howarth, a producer for ABC television, has served the Village as a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Board. As a

trustee, Jamie Howarth says he hopes to facilitate the flow of ideas "through the hopper" of formal procedures and regulations, in an effort to see many of the ideas generated by the Village boards and commissions - slope legislation, wetlands protection, etc., become a reality. Jamie will begin his tenure at a time when the Village Government is reeling from a painful office and record-keeping reorganization, and serious allegations of misdeeds by the highway department head. "It as always challenging to manage a Village in a sea of regulation, and with limited resources. We need to accept the fact that there are always things that need to be corrected, instead of going into 'bunker mode'. I feel that I bring to this job an ability to look at a bigger picture, see 'around the corner', and offer a response to our current problems that shapes how we want this village to operate in the future. I think that it is important for Piermont to align itself with other River Villages with common interests - particularly as relates to the future of the Tappan Zee corridor, and police contract negotiation. Piermont has a great police department, but we need to avoid politicizing the contract negotiation process, and work with other villages in seeking professional advice, and common solutions in resolving wage disputes."

Dr. Muriel Prince Warren

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Curtis Lowey, a village newcomer is Piermont's second trustee candidate. This is Curt's first run for elected office. He has served as an alternate to the Planning Board this past year. Curt is retired from his advertising and sales promotion company, and enjoys life on the Piermont Pier with his wife Bette in a home that overlooks the new walking path. "Living on the Pier is a great joy - Piermont is a pedestrian village, ideally suited for us. We're looking forward to taking the new north path on our daily walks out to the end of the Pier." Curt hopes that he can be instrumental in bringing together newer residents with the folks that have lived here a long time, encourage volunteerism, and help new arrivals appreciate and respect the village's special qualities. "Hurricane Floyd woke up the people in this village to the fact that what you do on your property not only affects your neighbor, but the village as a whole. I think people are ready now for more protective legislation to protect slopes and prevent rampant development. I have a lot to learn about the village - I am just beginning. The more I discover about the village, the more interesting it becomes."

Thank you Ronnie and Rod

Ronnie Hickey will be leaving office after has serving Piermont as trustee and Deputy Mayor for 4 years. Her hope for Piermont's future? "Frankly? I'd like to see construction stopped in the Village!

I'd like to see us focus on the Sparkill Creek. Most people don't know that when Piermont Bay was last dredged, the material was dumped on the south side of the Pier- that and the development upstream has created a crisis for the Sparkill Creek. Flooding there is increasingly serious. I'd like to see the Village take more responsibility for solving the problem."

Rod Johnson will be leaving office after 7 years in public office. When asked for words in parting, Johnson responded that his wish is that the village comes to really understand and value it's special character, and reflect and enforce that in its zoning. "The village board has before it three proposed amendments to the zoning code that I've drafted. I want to see them passed. The first establishes criteria for a minimum lot area. The second amendment identifies, gives value to, and seeks to preserve environmentally sensitive features among them Piermont's wetlands, St. John's Creek and Whitton Brook, and steep slopes. Thirdly, I have a tree preservation and reforestation guidelines amendment on the table. All three are moving very slowly I hope they will be passed in March." Johnson would like to be nominated to the Planning Board upon retiring as trustee.

Jamie Howarth and Curtis Lowey will be running on the Democratic and Republican lines Tuesday, March 21.

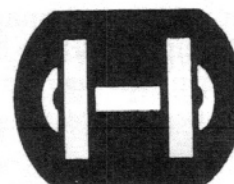
~ Margaret Grace



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Organized Baseball in Piermont

This is the time of year when baseball fans start to dream about the season ahead. If you live in Piermont you don't have to make the trip to Yankee Stadium or Shea to enjoy an exciting game.

For me, going to the game means forgetting my cares and responsibilities and being completely absorbed in the atmosphere of the ballpark and the intricacies of the play. Since I've raised four boys in the 32 years I've lived in Piermont, these moments have stretched into an uncountable number of happy hours down at the field, rooting for my team as the afternoon stretches into evening over the salt marsh. My older boys played on the invincible Dodgers, coached by Art Rittenberg, back in the days when Woody Lynch was the president of the T-shirt league, before it was P.A.L. Riding our bikes home after the game, we would stop at Rene's (in "The Patch" behind Mom Miraglia's) for one of his delicious hamburgers and an orange soda and sit at the card tables he set up on the floor of his garage. Art fondly remembers the coaches meetings from those days, which were held monthly in the back room of Mom Miraglia's with pizza and beer. It was at one of these meetings that Art and the other coaches persuaded Woody Lynch that the time had come for girls to be admitted into the T-shirt league, paving the way for the first girls who were all-

stars, Carlie Ryan, Devorah Goldberg and Jenny Hammerstein.

My younger boys played on the mighty Tigers, coached by their dad, and when they turned 14, helped him out by being assistant coaches. Now, going down to the game in Piermont is enhanced by making dinner out of the hotdogs, hamburgers, soda and Poland Spring Water, that you can buy on Thursdays.

Organized baseball for boys in Piermont began around 1960, when Skeets Tavinere, then the police chief, wanted something "to keep them off the streets." He turned to Woody Lynch, Howard Brawner and John Hickey to help him start the league and coach the teams. Howard reminisces about going to Sears in Hackensack to buy a fence for the field. Sears went out on a limb and extended credit to the fledgling project and was, over time, completely paid back. The games were played on a field where Parking Lot D is now, before being moved up to what was called Whiting's Field, where the Tappan Zee Elementary School playground is now. Howard remembers that the players were asked to pay a quarter to join the league—to give them a sense of commitment and responsibility.

League baseball goes farther back in time in Piermont, getting started as far back as the turn of the century. As Anthony Komornick reminisced for the 1976 bicentennial oral history project, "almost everyone played baseball. And the reason you could was because there were so many open fields. We had "the patch"—the present Ladik Street and Liberty Street. At one time that was an open field there." Tony Sorfiento remembers the Piermont Shamrocks that played other teams around the county with games every Sunday. Softball games were popular too. Kathryn Smith who grew up in Piermont, remembers as a girl going to games organized by men who worked at the mill. There were several teams and they played in the evenings where Parking Lot D is now, in front of a large grandstand.

~ Marjorie Bauer



Assistant coach Chris Krumack with 1994 Tigers.

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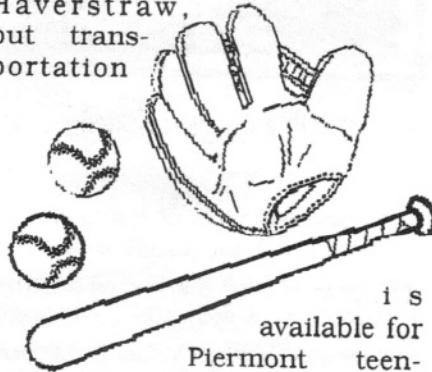
P.A.L. In Piermont

The Piermont Chapter of the Police Athletic League was started by Tom Gaynor in 1979. Long before the idea of "community policing" became popular, it was being practiced here through the P.A.L., with the philosophy that close contact between the police and those growing up in the community fosters trust and communication. The Police Athletic League is a national organization but the level of activity varies from state to state. In New York State the P.A.L. is particularly visible. Officer Michael O'Shea, the village policeforce youth officer, has been in charge of the P.A.L. since he first started working in Piermont in 1985, and he proudly claims that our P.A.L. program is second to none. The Community Center enables the Piermont P.A.L. to be the only program in Rockland County with a building. The close-knit character of our village with a downtown encourages kids to congregate there.

During the school year, the Community Center is open on weekday nights from 7:00 to 9:00—and in the summer two nights a week—for kids aged 12 to 18. There is an open gym as well as games such as air hockey, a TV and arts and crafts for the less athletically inclined. Joe Krummack, who ran the program when it was under the jurisdiction of the the Village trustees, has remained

the director at the Community Center since the P.A.L. was organized in 1979. There are about 250 teenagers participating in the Community Center program and on any given night there are five to 30 kids there.

Mike O'Shea started a boxing program for P.A.L. in Piermont, which has since been moved to Haverstraw, but transportation



is available for Piermont teenagers who want to participate and we have had some champion boxers in the program. Mike remembers particularly the Shaw brothers, Jacob and Austin.

Mike and Joe also organize monthly field trips for P.A.L. Upcoming trips include one on March 3~, to the Army-Air Force hockey game, and the next on April 29~ to the Museum of Natural History. Every summer there is a camping trip. In the past there have been camping trips to Lake George and to Assiteague Island.

Baseball is the other important component of our P.A.L. program. From April to June, approximately

120 boys and girls participate in T-ball and the team league games. T-ball, supervised by Art Rittenberg (who has coached every year since he moved to Piermont in 1973), is designed for 5 to 7 year olds to learn how to play the game before they graduate to one of the four teams—the Dodgers, the Tigers, the White Sox and the Yankees. Each team plays about 12 games during the season, which culminates in an all-star game and the traditional potluck awards dinner at the Goswick Pavillion, attended by hundreds of Piermont fans.

Our baseball program, which stresses sportsmanship and enjoyment of the game, over competition, has a great reputation outside the village and attracts children from every town in the county. Here is the mission statement of the Piermont P.A.L. T-ball and T-shirt Division: "P.A.L. instructional baseball gives children a safe, supportive environment to learn about baseball and sportsmanship without the pressures of extreme competitiveness. Every child gets to play. Guided by a commitment to fair play, P.A.L. coaches inspire kids to love baseball. They instill an appreciation for the rewards of teamwork and they encourage self-confidence in each player. They are dedicated to teaching the basics to children at

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The Environmental Marketplace

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This past December, Piermont voters overwhelmingly approved the creation of a Special Library District, which means that we can now really move ahead with plans for our new library. But now also seems like a good time to go back over some of what we already provide. We often assume that everyone is aware of what's available, but occasionally wake up to the fact that that may not be true!

Not too long ago, I was surprised to hear a patron exclaim, "Oh, you mean you can take out the magazines?" In my complacency, I had assumed that EVERYONE knew that! Clearly not the case. So, yes. You can take out the magazines. While it is quite true that many libraries don't permit it, this one does, and makes available some 80 plus titles, all of which circulate for one week.

The pleasure found in taking home a huge stack of magazines ranging from Architectural Digest to Vegetarian Times for perusal on a long winter's night is, of course, only enhanced by the realization that you are saving tons of money. Have a look at the newsstand prices: MARTHA STEWART LIVING: \$4.50; ART & ANTIQUES: \$4.95; VOGUE: \$3.50; ARTFORUM: \$7.00; HARPER'S: \$4.25, and so on. Your week's periodical consumption could be worth your total per capita expenditure for library services (\$54.44 in 1998, last figures available). The rest of



From The Library

the year is free! If you add a couple of books (+-\$25.00) to your stack, yo're way ahead! What a bargain.

When you also add to the benefit consideration a question of the time and energy saved by not having to store and recycle all that paper, it gets even better. And, on top of it all, the library further encourages recycling by making baskets of discarded magazines available free to all takers.

Several new periodical titles have been added to the collection in the last year or two, including the beautiful APERTURE, a quarterly journal of fine photography with a cover price of \$18.50, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, INTERIORS, POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHY and FINE GARDENING. Of

course, your suggestions and requests are always welcome.

Another faulty assumption was recently brought to my attention when I heard that a long-time patron didn't know that one could reserve books from our public access terminal. We've been automated for a couple of years, but didn't add the public access terminal right away, so many patrons may not know that you can sit down at your own terminal, search the catalog and "place holds," which really means to reserve/order a book, yourself. The person at the desk can show you how to do this if you don't already know. You will be called when the book comes in. You can also search the catalog and reserve books from your home computer. Go to the Piermont Library page (www.rcls.org/pmt/) and follow instructions from there. And if you select Piermont's page you can also find out about the monthly film program for children as well as our current art exhibit and any special programs being sponsored by the library. There are also links to various sites of local interest.

UPCOMING



MARCH

In March, we welcome a show of drawings by Nyack resident Don Iannucci. Don is currently Assistant Professor of Art at Rockland Community College. He was

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recently awarded a fellowship at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, where he did the series of pen and ink drawings that he will be showing here.

The theme of the work is sacrifice; both religious and personal sacrifice. There is a strong sense of risk and failure in the work. The images raise questions; they are narrative and one wonders about the character in the scenes. Don explores a comic book like quality and is planning to continue the series.



APRIL

This month, which is EARTH MONTH at the library, we'll return to the discussion of the issue of open space preservation begun last year, with a closer and more detailed look at the "Cowboy Fields" property in Piermont.

Walking around this property, which is in total almost 40 acres, one discovers a complex landscape that includes a small pond, a stream, and permanent wetlands, along with steep slopes, huge old tulip and oak trees, and a variety of birds and other flora and fauna. An attempt is being made to inventory some of these priceless resources and to find a way to preserve this parcel for future generations. The display will focus on some of the significant "details" which make this land special.



MAY

Black and white photographs by Riverdale resident David Cockcroft will be on exhibit here in May. Reverend Cockcroft is retired from the Riverdale Presbyterian Church and is focusing on a long time interest in photography. Some of his work was included in our "Amateur Photographers" show last year.



JUNE

The traditional display of work by the children of the Community Playgroup will usher in the summer months once again this year!

REMINDERS

Public fax service is available at a cost of \$2.00 for the first page and \$1.00 for each additional page to send, and \$.50 per page to receive. The fax number is 365-1423. The cost of photocopies has been reduced to \$.10 per copy.

We have two PCs for public use, and access to the Internet is also available.

The library is located at 153 Hudson Terrace and is open from 2 to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 1 to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. For more information, please call 359-4595.

~Grace Mitchell

Baseball

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all levels of ability and experience. Opening lines of communication between parents, children and Piermont police officers is also an important goal of the P.A.L.

Michael O'Shea is justly proud of Piermont's P.A.L. program. He credits its success to the dedication of the volunteers, who year after year work hard to make it not only possible but free of charge to every child who participates. He particularly notes the Board of the Piermont Chapter of the Police Athletic League—Sylvia Carbonell, Joan Chadwick, Elaine De Francesca, Julie Pagiaroli and David Poberskin, the baseball coaches—Bonnie Berchielli, Philip Hoffmann Bill Oswald, Art Rittenberg, Larry Soehnel Pete Solaft and Dean Taucher, the baseball "commissioner" Bill Bauer, as well as the many parents and members of the community who raise the funds to buy uniforms and equipment.

Sign up for the baseball program at the village hall starting in March. If you are interested in coaching or volunteering, please contact Sylvia Carbonell in the Village Clerk's Office.

~ Marjorie Bauer



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Join Us! The Piermont Civic Association is a nonprofit group dedicated to the betterment of Piermont. Thanks to membership dues, numerous fundraising events and countless 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. Please mail this application to: Piermont Civic Association, Box 454, Piermont, NY 10968 I have enclosed: \$_____ 2000 PCA Family Membership (\$15 includes _____ the _____ *Newsletter*)

NAME _____
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A Night With Ned

"No one gets famous in cabaret—it's therapy," chuckled Ned Kelly as the last few diners in the Freelance Cafe finished up on a foggy late February weeknight.

But famous he is, at least to local folk, as the manager of the Freelance Cafe in downtown Piermont, and as a performer. On March 13th Ned's fans will have an opportunity to see his cabaret revue at the Turning Point, where he'll star in a benefit for the Piermont Community Playgroup.

"Taking the Night Off With Ned Kelly," with special guests Mary Lou Scriber and Kathy Rutigliano, will feature old standards from Cole Porter to Sondheim and Broadway to contemporary hits by Anne Hampton Calloway and Craig Cornelius. Ned will perform under the artistic direction of Paul Trueblood.

For the past 11 years, Ned has been a fixture in Piermont, managing the highly successful Freelance Cafe next door to Xavier's, restaurants owned by Ned's brother Peter X. Kelly.

"We shared a room when we were kids and here we are again, sharing a room," said Ned, as Peter chuckled. While speaking, he gave quiet direction to the staff and discussed the night's business with Peter.

Ned declined to specify whether he was older or younger than Peter except to say he was ninth among 12 children who grew up in Croton-on-Hudson. He attended Hendrik Hudson High in Montrose and received a degree in Theatre from Fordham. After graduating, he headed to San Diego where he per-



Ned Kelly on stage.

formed in the City Light Opera and the California Performing Arts Center for Children.

"I was never far from a restaurant," said Ned. He did some bi-coastal commuting after Peter opened up Xavier's in Westchester. Ned moved to Rockland full time in 1988 when Freelance opened and his brother asked him to run it.

"It was great to get back near the city," he said, New York offering him the opportunity to perform again, off and on.

Ned's cabaret revue began as an experiment several years ago for Xavier's in Westchester. It had a two night run during the Christmas season. "It's now 18 nights and it's mostly booked by June."

It was during one of these performances that director Jonathan Demme spotted Ned and gave him a spot in his award-winning film Philadelphia. And it was a performance this past holiday season that prompted Ned's invitation to perform a benefit for the Piermont Community Playgroup.

"My nephew Dylan is enrolled in at the Playgroup, so that, along with my commitment to the organization prompted me to say yes," said Ned.

~Greg Creedon



Piermont, factory days. Photo by Fred Burrell.

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George T Flobeck

Village Borrows

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belli claimed that the "last four or five meetings" had started at 7 p.m. Long time observers disagree, saying that 8 p.m. has been the starting time for every recent public session.

"The village is experiencing a very serious cash flow problem," Mayor Hardy said in opening, "because revenues that have been expected have not been realized and also there have been a number of over expenditures in our budget."

A shortfall of \$93,450 in unpaid taxes was the first and simpler problem he outlined. More than half of that, \$50,000 is owed in fees from 28 Associates, the developers of the Piermont Landing project. The rest is spread among other property owners and that's not unusual, officials say. Rockland County routinely lends villages money to make up the difference. The trouble is that it doesn't pay until after April 1 and Piermont needs the dough now.

The reasons for borrowing the additional \$238,000 are far more complex. The Mayor at first said it was caused by the extraordinary amounts the village laid out to repair storm damage. "Has the \$238,000 actually been expended?" Trustee Devan asked

in measured tones, beginning a dialogue that ended up sounding like an excerpt from "Alice in Wonderland."

"No, it has not" replied the Mayor, explaining that the village did expend \$100,000 for Hudson Terrace sewer repairs and a little more than \$28,000 to fix a wall at the Community Center.

"So a little over \$128,000 has been expended?" asked Devan, a retired CEO.

"Well," replied the Mayor, "let me say it has been expended but the bills have not been paid."

In any case, the Mayor, Trustee Ed Traynor, who also serves as Deputy Mayor, and the village attorney agreed that the Federal Office of Emergency Management (FEMA) promised Piermont a \$200,000 reimbursement for the storm damage.

The village also has had an unusual number of unbudgeted expenses, Mayor Hardy said. These include \$35,700 in waived fees to 28 Associates (the same company that owes Piermont \$50,000) for a sprinkler system; \$35,000 to Orangetown for seven years worth of road salt; \$35,000 in unused sick and holiday pay to Shirley Lynch, who retired as clerk-treasurer, and \$20,000 more than planned for fire department physicals. In addition, building permits only pulled in \$44,000 so

far this year, nearly \$100,000 less than had been anticipated.

The Mayor's request for the bond votes came after an unprecedented series weekend-long meetings in which he consulted with the Village Attorney and financial experts on how to solve the suddenly discovered cash shortage. Department heads were called in and told to hold over time and expenses to a minimum.

The dispute between Devan and the Mayor boiled over after Hardy replaced Shirley Lynch with Paula Dickow, a woman everyone agrees is highly competent but has no village government experience. The Mayor then appointed former Mayor Mimi Bryan as Dickow's deputy, saying that she had the experience the office needed.

Devan claims that the Mayor had been ready to hire a younger person with less political baggage and more computer training who could replace Dickow in six or seven years when she's expected to retire. He adds that all but one of the other trustees were also against the appointment that he terms "pure patronage."

Traynor, who says he often sides with Devan, doesn't this time. "We all voiced our concerns about the appointment but we all, including Fred, felt that it was the best thing to do," he recalls. "Now,

continued on next page

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Village Borrows

continued from previous page

it's one thing to say after things have gone wrong and that we should have done this or that. That's called Monday morning quarterbacking."

Piermont resident Peggy Fox Sennish was shocked by the village's sloppy record keeping. "I have to know what my balance is on a weekly basis and what the bills are," she said, telling the Mayor and the board that she heads a small New York book publishing company. "I don't see how you can run things this way. I understand the computers are in transition. That's common. Even if you do it by hand, you have to know what your obligations are, you have to balance the books at the end of the month. I'm just a little flabbergasted," she added.

~ Bob Samuels

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Around The Village

Rubbish and debris pick up will be starting again on Tuesday, April 4, 2000, and ending on Tuesday, October 17, 2000. In starting the rubbish and debris program the first scheduled pick up on Tuesday, April 4th will be for the entire week. Below are the scheduled dates for rubbish pick up:

April 4 and 18
May 2, 16 and (Wed.) May 31
June 13 and 27
July 11 and 25
August 8 and 22.
(Wed.) September 6 and (Tues.) September 19.
October 3 and 17 (This will be the last day)

All items that are discarded should be put out either tied, bundled, bagged or neatly stacked in an orderly fashion. Wood must be put out in lengths no longer than 5 feet. Contractors doing work must remove their own debris.

PLEASE DO NOT DISCARD RUBBISH AND DEBRIS UNTIL WEEKEND BEFORE THE SCHEDULED PICK UP!

The recycling pick up will be every other Thursday, during the same week as rubbish pick up. Listed below are the scheduled pick up dates (Recycling pick-up for Tweed Blvd. residents will be on Wednesday of each scheduled recycling week!):

March 9 and 23
April 6 and 20.
May 4 and 1
June 1, 15 and 29.
July 13 and 27.
August 10 and 24
September 7 and 21
October 5 and 19
November 2, 16 and 30
December 14 and 28

Thank you!
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Readers Write

To the Editor:

As a bicyclist, Piermont resident, and former resident of River Road in Grand View and Manhattan, I read Elyse Knight's letter to the editor (November 1999) about cyclists with interest. I think it is somewhat exaggerated.

Yes, many cyclists do ride in packs that prevent cars from passing. The police should ticket them. And yes, bicyclists occasionally talk in loud tones—it's pretty difficult to hear when you're biking at 20 mph because of the wind you create. But I often bike in the early

morning on weekends and have heard few cyclists yell other than to warn each other of a car to the rear. As for noise, despite what Ms. Knight said in her letter, I think cyclists are a distant second to Manhattan's background cacophony of car alarms, sirens, and people who somehow think Sunday morning is still Saturday night.

Not all bicycle racers are noisy boors any more than all drivers on Piermont Avenue are reckless speeders. Ironically, most cyclists bicycle through Piermont and Grand View for the same reason that Manhattanites choose to move here: it's quiet, scenic, and remarkably uncongested for an

area less than 20 miles from New York City. It is not, however, free of the petty annoyances that come from living amid people who choose forms of recreation different from one's own.

I applaud Concerned Residents of River Road for trying to make the area quieter and more livable, and I will ask the cyclists I know to show more consideration to those who live here. I would also ask people here to keep in mind that most cyclists—even racers—are decent men and women who really enjoy the area. Try not to "despise" us.

Dick Benfield

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