

The Piermont Newsletter

VOLUME XXXIX NO. 2

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FALL 2009

Those Immigrants Among Us

Most Piermonters have seen the anxious and sometimes forlorn faces of the Spanish-speaking men in front of the mini market on Route 9W. They are hoping a contractor or a homeowner will pick them up and give them a day's work. The story of what these men have gone through to get here is often a tale of courage and fortitude. Many of them have witnessed unspeakable horror in their own countries.

The majority are immigrants from El Salvador, a Massachusetts-size Central American country tucked between Guatemala and Honduras. For the past 12 years, El Salvador has been embroiled in a bloody civil war largely fought in the rural areas where most of the people are from. In March of this year, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), a group of former Marxist guerrillas from the jungle, finally gained power. The US once targeted the FMLN as a threat to all of Latin America, whose defeat was considered to be worth billions of dollars and thousands of lives. These young revolutionary leaders are now middle-aged men and the US looks forward to working with the new government.

"Often we would see dead bodies lying in the street," recalls 35-year-old Cain Mazariego. He came here to the Diplomat Gardens apartments in 1991 from La Jolla, El Salvador, the hometown of many of the people who once lived at the Route 9W complex. "Bob, the manager, rented to Spanish people because he knew they were hard working and that they paid the rent on time," says Cain. His first job was as a dishwasher/busboy in a local restaurant.

Getting here wasn't easy or cheap. The 17-year-old Cain paid a "coyote" \$3,000. (Coyotes are men who promise to guide immigrants safely to the US.) The price got him a bus ride through Guatemala and Mexico. It took him 36 days to make the arduous journey. "It was not a straight trip," Cain explains.

"The coyotes had to make sure the highway was clear, with no police check points. Sometimes we would be waiting in a motel for three to five days."

He had to hoof it when he got to the U.S. border. "It's difficult when you cross the desert," Cain notes. Carrying a backpack with food, water, and his belongings, Cain often slept out in the open, right on the ground. "We had to dress in black," he notes. "Helicopter patrols flew overhead shining spotlights at us."

Two years after Cain got here, he had to return to El Salvador for his father's funeral. Cain came back to Piermont with his new bride, 17 year-old Fanya. They paid the coyotes \$4,000 each and traversed the Mexican desert at night on foot. After 25 days of traveling, they took inner tubes across the Rio Grande, arriving in Arizona with enough money to fly to Los Angeles.

"I worked in LA for two

weeks to earn the money for the flight to New York," Cain remembers. It had been some honeymoon for the couple, who had only been married a month. However, Fanya knows she was fortunate to make the arduous trip under the protection of her husband. Other women tell tales of sexual abuse by the coyotes whom they paid to guarantee safe passage.

At the Diplomat, Fanya looked for work as a house cleaner while Cain went back to waiting for work on 9W. "A lot of people in Piermont have good hearts," notes Cain. "They would bring jackets and food and hats and gloves to the young men waiting out in the cold."

One day, a blonde woman stopped her pick-up truck at the 9W mini mart. She hired Cain full time to work at her stable in Orangeburg. Having grown up on a ranch, Cain was ideal for the

continued on page 14



Fred Burrell

Latin American men wait for work daily by the convenience store on 9W.

President's Corner



We were supposed to remember this summer for the Quadricentennial. Piermont marked the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's discovery of "our river" by welcoming a replica of the Half Moon, Hudson's ship, with fireworks and a party.

That doesn't count—this summer is going down as The Summer of the Panthers. Ever since news of the big cats in Snedens Landing began circulating in March, that's all anyone wants to talk about. There have been numerous reports of subsequent sightings in the woods there and in Tallman Mountain Park. People swear they have seen them in Piermont too.

Journalists love the story. It's drawn the attention of *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *New York Magazine* and other publications. Most writers cast a bemused eye on our panthers. They seem to doubt that the big cats exist and

threaten Bill Murray, Al Pacino and the other famous and not so famous residents of the glamorous hamlet to our south.

Others have had fun with the cat tale (pun intended) too. They published the *Snedens Landing Quarterly Poetry Review* to present whimsical panther verse. In our village, Canzonas Market came up with a Panther Special (chicken cutlet with melted mozzarella) and Mayor Sanders used his computer to Photoshop a big black panther on a flying saucer.

The flying saucer picture was fitting because, as with them, either you believe that they are out there or you don't. Completely reliable witnesses swear they've seen them. Doubters ask why, when almost everyone has a cell phone camera, no one has taken even a fuzzy picture of a big cat.

The Orangetown Town Board could not ignore the real fears of people. It

has listened to those who believe that the big cats are a real danger to small children and pets. In an attempt to learn the truth, it has hired trackers and purchased six surveillance cameras.

Whatever they find out, we'll remember this time as The Summer of the Panthers. The poor Quadricentennial didn't stand a chance.

~Bob Samuels

The Newsletter Is On The Web

The Piermont Newsletter is also available on the World Wide Web. You can find it at:

<http://piermont-ny.com/newsletter/>,

free to everyone with an internet connection.



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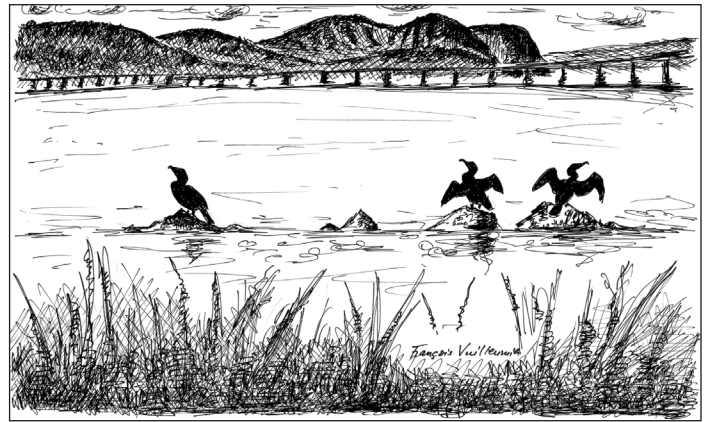
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Piermont Landing

Birds On The Pier

In her book, *Where to Watch Birds in New York State: The Top 500 Sites*, Susan Rodney Drennan included the Piermont Pier (known as "The Pier" among birders), a famous hot-spot in Rockland County. I have seen nearly 150 species of birds there, but other birders have listed more. Some species were rarities. A couple of winters ago a Snowy Owl spent weeks at the Pier and was seen by thousands of people. And that same winter (!) we had the visit of an Ivory Gull, an even rarer species that normally doesn't venture far from the Arctic pack-ice. If you were on the Pier during the Ivory Gull's stay you would have seen legions of birders armed with cannon-like spotting scopes. For such sightings and more, Susan Drennan gave the Pier four ★★★★★ (her highest ranking) for spring, three ★★★ for autumn and winter, and two ★★ for summer.

For me, however, the Pier deserves four ★★★★★ in every season. Whether looking for waders on the mudflats on its north side, ducks in the shallow waters on its south side or the more turbulent waters of the Hudson River at its tip, one is never disappointed. The great thing about birding the Piermont Pier is the element of surprise. Every time I venture there I find some species I didn't expect or, better still, see some interesting behavior. In June and July, for example, the mulberry trees bear large numbers of purple fruit that fall on the road. This is when the ever present Mallard Ducks waddle out of the mudflats and hop onto the concrete for a feast. They love the fruit so much that they barely move away when you drive near them. I suspect that the fermenting fruit contain enough alcohol to make the ducks a bit tipsy. Incidentally, many of these Mallards are quasi domesticated. They also exhibit strange, white-spotted plumages that depart from their wild ancestors. These birds carry genes of truly domesticated ducks like the all-white Peking Ducks (that gourmets like à l'orange). I won't mention the Canada Geese (not Canadian, please!). They are always there. They breed there. They winter there.

In all seasons expect to see gulls, many of them. By the way, if you wish to sound like a birder, do not call them seagulls, but Ring-billed Gulls (the smallest species), or Great Black-backed Gulls (huge, with dark slate upperparts), or Herring Gulls (medium sized, with pale gray mantles). A few crows



loaf on the Pier most of the year and identify themselves as Fish Crows by their repeated, nasal caw-caw. The little brown birds that fly low and hesitantly over the bushes lining the road and then drop down out of sight are Song Sparrows. Have you noticed the dark spot in the center of their breast? I almost forgot to mention the Double-crested Cormorants, large, long-billed black birds that perch on rocks north of the Pier to dry their wings after some underwater fishing.

After mid-April, Tree Swallows appear at the Pier. Small, dark blue above and white below, they zigzag over the water, apparently erratically. Actually they know what they are doing, which is an incessant search for insects. Almost every year, a pair nests in one of the nest boxes placed along the Pier by some bird-lover. If a swallow goes in, wait a few minutes, and some distance away, and you may see its owner at the entrance, singing its sweet gurgling song.

In May, the male orange-and-black Baltimore Orioles, freshly returned from the tropics, proclaim their territories in the cottonwoods with loud and melodious calls. In July they are silent because they are busy feeding their young. It is only in the winter, after the leaves have fallen out, that you will notice, high above the road, the football-shaped woven nest they had built earlier. In July also, flocks of Robin-sized brownish birds with short tails and triangular wings feed in the flats at low tide, behaving like shorebirds. They are European Starlings, a species that was introduced in the 1890s in New York City's Central Park, and now occurs across the entire continent.

In August and September real shorebirds stop for a day
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Say Hello To Jessica Maisano, Piermont's Librarian

Met Jessica Maisano who has been Librarian at the Dennis McHugh Piermont Public Library in Piermont since last year.

Where were you before you came here?

I was director of the Catskill Public and Palenville Branch libraries. Before that I was at Pratt and graduated in 2005 with a Masters degree in Library Science.

And before that?

I grew up in River Edge, New Jersey, went through Catholic schools, and then went to Drew University with a major in English and a minor in Theater. After that I tried to get a publishing job, but with no luck.

I did some captioning for the hearing impaired for a company that did that work for cable networks. But I wanted something that would be a career rather than just a job and I wanted to do something useful for the community. I hit on library science.

People think of librarians as checking out books. What is the job nowadays?

Oh, so many different things, starting with making sure to get materials that the patrons want—books, films, music—working on special projects for the library board, collecting statistics on things like materials usage and I help with the children's programs.

How do you decide which things to order for the library?

We use the *New York Times* best sellers lists, reviews, lists of upcoming titles and pay a lot of attention to what people ask for. With the leasing system,



Jessica Maisano.

Fred Burrell

we can get books for a few months when they're in demand without adding them to the permanent collection. And there's the whole Ramapo Catskill Library System, but if a book is very popular other libraries in the system put a "do not loan" hold on it, so we want to have copies ourselves and not wait for interlibrary loan.

How have the new hours for the library worked out? It's open so much more than it used to be when it was up the hill.

People seem satisfied. There's some question about opening on Sunday, but we have programs on Sunday and it would be difficult to operate as a library while those special events are going on.

I read that in the last year before the

library moved here, there were 2,324 visitors in the entire year. How are you doing now?

Just this June we had 1804 visitors and we circulated 1505 items. A year ago June it was 1553 and 1090.

What do you read?

The last novel I read was *A Mercy* by Toni Morrison. I took a course in college in which we studied the novels of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker, so I'm a real fan.

Mostly I read non-fiction, about training my dog or . . . losing weight, that kind of thing.

Do you watch much TV?

I go for non-fiction there too-- things like true crime stories on Tru TV—though I really don't have much time to watch. I rarely watch comedy or drama series.

Do you have a pet?

I share a dog Sadie with my ex-husband. (she laughs) I have visitation rights.

What do you enjoy most about the job?

I enjoy it all. But I love the special events, and I especially enjoy the programs we have for kids on Mondays and Wednesdays.

What is the most surprising thing about you I could tell people?

I suppose it's that I don't read much. I'm a librarian who doesn't read very much. I have a stack of books that I want to read, but I have trouble making time for it.

~Joan Gussow

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Many Bridges Over Troubled Waters

Like Venice, Piermont has many bridges -- no less than three for a village of two and a half thousand. And like Venice, Piermont's bridges cross less than pristine water and have local significance: two are rare survivors of 19th century construction techniques and have acquired state and federal historical designations.

They are, starting at the river end, the Army Bridge, the Drawbridge and the Rockland Road Bridge, which we also call the Silk Mill Bridge. (There is a fourth, also over the Creek, half in Sparkill and the rest in Piermont.)

As in Venice, there is good news for some bridges and bad for others. On the positive side, the restoration and rededication of the drawbridge was a major event, as County officials presided over the ribbon cutting of a project they had financed at a cost of almost a million dollars. In its new incarnation, it will serve as a spot for resting and fishing and for access to Tallman Park.

The bridge is a rare example, perhaps the only surviving one, of a hand-cranked single-leaf metal drawbridge with a lifting system that dates back to designs in use in the Middle Ages. They built it in 1890 to allow passage of fishing boats to Haddock's Hall, the brick structure upstream. On the return trip, local boats took produce and products to New York City. During World War II they used the Hall to make silk military ribbons, according to historian Bud Sedlack.



Fred Burrell

Piermont residents and dignitaries (Scott Vanderhoff, for example) admire the newly restored, newly reopened bridge during ceremonies on August 7.

The so-called Silk Mill Bridge has not been as lucky as its counterpart downstream. Constructed in the mid-nineteenth
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A Modern Day Henry Hudson Still Seeks The Northwest Passage



Fred Burrell

A replica of Henry Hudson's Half Moon visited Piermont.

Our man Fred Burrell met Chip Reynolds, the Captain of the replica Henry Hudson's Half Moon, when it visited Piermont for the Quadricentennial. Burrell interviewed Reynolds later by e-mail. We don't know about Captain Hudson but Captain Reynolds turned out to be a good sport.

You said you have made over 100 trips between Manhattan and Albany. Have you discovered any northwest passages to the Orient that Hudson may have overlooked?

No such sites have shown yet, but I keep looking.

How much has the Hudson Valley changed?

In most places, the Hudson Valley is much the same as in 1609. I can anchor off Yonkers, and look one way to see a dense urban area, but look the other way and see almost exactly what Hudson saw. In certain places I can use Hudson's sailing directions, just as he wrote them.

Is it still, "as pleasant a land as one can tread upon"?
Yes, it certainly is.

What percent of the time is the Half Moon under sail?

Sometimes we can go all day with no engine; the biggest reason we need to use the engine is that people want us to arrive at an exact location at an exact time.

How many leagues does the Half Moon make on a gallon of diesel fuel?

About one gallon per league, or about three miles. But we weigh as much as about 70 standard cars, so on a miles per ton basis, we do pretty well!

You said boats come along side and give you fish. Do you pay for them with beads?

This does not happen often, and the fishermen are usually happy to pass on their catch just for a close look at the ship.

Have you had any trouble with natives in canoes or kayaks shooting arrows at you?

No, we get along very well with the kayakers. I happen to be one.

Hudson died after being put aboard a small boat by mutineers on Hudson Bay and left to starve and freeze to death. Does this bit of history constrain you from exploring farther north than Albany?

No, it is the worry of going up on the rocks, or getting stuck under a bridge that stops me from going farther north than Albany.

As you sail up and down the river, what do you hope to discover?

Secure and proper docking.

Good luck finding a Northwest Passage—I'm sure it's there and you'll find it eventually.



Captain Reynolds

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Piermont Pooches May Get A Run

If the organizers can raise the money, Piermont dogs will soon have their own 30 by 150 foot dog run off Ferry Road, beyond the Little League outfield.

Right now the closest run for Piermont pooches, which mostly live in house with small yards, is in north New City. Orangetown has talked about building one in Sparkill but nothing has happened. So dog owners Linda Hacker and Margaret Grace, both officers in the Piermont Civic Association, drew up plans and won approval in principal from the Village Board. The run would be just for the use of village dog owners.

Dan Sherman, chairman of the Piermont Parks Commission, estimates that the planned double-gate and fencing for the facility will cost approximately \$3,500. Linda and Margaret are asking the Village Board to have the Piermont Highway Department do the construction.

"The idea is to keep it as simple as possible," says Linda.

"This is not intended as a 'dog park,'" adds Margaret. "There are no plans for dog activity centers, a dog statue, none of that."

They modeled the run's rules on those used successfully across the river in Ossining. Under them, Piermonters wishing to use the run must sign an agreement at Village Hall to indemnify the village against any responsibility. They'll then be given a set of rules to read and sign and be issued a gate key.

Over the next few weeks, volunteers will be out in Piermont looking for donations. They hope to be able to have the park ready in the Fall. "Am I imagining it, or are there dogs on Ferry Road already looking through the gate?" asks Margaret.

For more information, or to donate to the fencing fund, contact Linda @365.3011.

Hudson River fish No-No's

The New York State Health Department warns that children younger than 15 and women of childbearing age should not to eat any fish from the Hudson River.

Here's what it has to say to the rest of us about dining on things from the river:

- No Channel catfish, gizzard shad, white catfish and the hepatopancreas, or "green stuff," of lobster and crab.

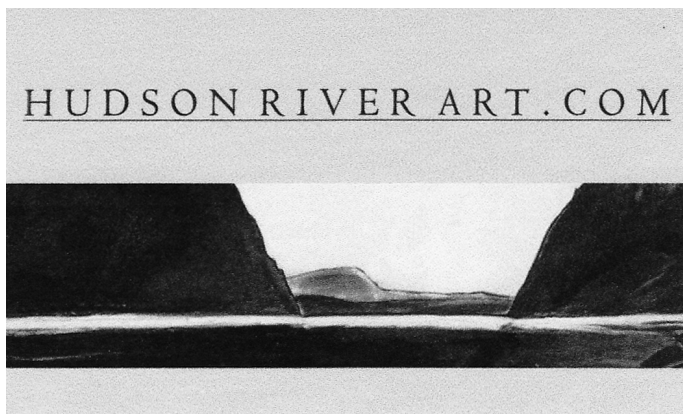
- No more than one (half-pound) meal per month: Atlantic needlefish, bluefish, brown bullhead, carp, goldfish, largemouth bass, rainbow smelt, smallmouth bass, striped bass, walleye, white perch.

- No more than six crabs per week: blue crab.

- No more than one meal per week of any other river fish.

It adds that it is illegal to catch or keep river eel.

More information is available at www.health.state.ny.us or by calling 800-458-1158, Ext. 27815.



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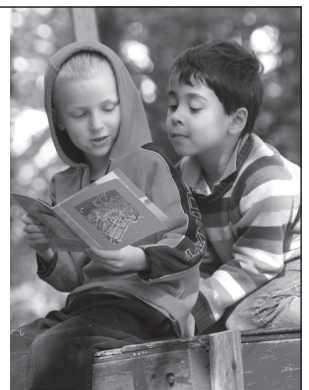
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From The Library

The Ramapo Catskill Library System reported record-breaking circulation figures for July. Our library also reported a significant increase in circulation and visits. The increase in circulation was fueled in part by a large new collection of audio-visual materials obtained with the help of a grant obtained for us by Senator Morahan, for which we thank him.

Beginning in September, the library will embark on a new series of programs entitled Piermont: Friends and Neighbors at 2 p.m. on Sundays. It will bring some of our very talented residents to the library to speak.

On Sunday, September 20, at 2 p.m., Paul Olsen, the Arthur Storke Memorial Professor of Earth & Environment Sciences at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory in Palisades, will present "The Beginning of the Age of Dinosaurs in New York and New Jersey". About his program, Olsen writes: "Dinosaurs were the dominant land animals for over 130 million years.

While nearly everyone has seen their skeletons and reconstructions and knows that they were the largest and fiercest land animals to walk the Earth, few know of their humble beginnings or how they came to be so important. Even fewer know of the remarkable record of their ascent preserved in Rockland County and neighboring New Jersey."

Paul Olsen is a native of New York State and a specialist in the early part

of the Age of Dinosaurs. He has written over 150 scientific papers, is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and has appeared in numerous television specials such as "Dinosaur! With Walter Cronkite" and most recently, the Discovery Channel's "Prehistoric New York".

On Sunday, October 18, Francois Vuilleumier (see his Birds of the Pier Story in on Page 3) will regale us with descriptions of his "Bird Studies from Piermont to Patagonia."

He'll illustrate his talk with slides, field sketches, and drawings of birds, many of which will be on exhibit in our gallery during the month of October. Francois will host a reception for the exhibit after his talk.

And finally, on Sunday, November 8, John Lipscomb, the Captain of the Riverkeeper's patrol boat the R. Ian Fletcher, will join us to talk about what he calls a "neighborhood watch for the river." In this case, the neighborhood he refers to is a 200-mile stretch of the Hudson from the Battery to Troy. The Riverkeeper says that each year "he travels approximately 6,000 nautical miles...searching out and deterring polluters," along with a whole host of other activities.

IN THE GALLERY

September – Landscapes: Pinhole images by Daniel Dugan

Daniel Dugan has had a strong interest in photography since the mid 1970s, and built his first 4x5 view camera in 1990. He soon discovered the unique

and elegant vision afforded by the pin-hole camera, and finds it to be the most personal form of the photographic image.

Mr. Dugan is also a noted figurative painter and a NYS licensed massage therapist. He teaches drawing the human figure at Rockland Center for the Arts, and Deep Tissue Massage at Healing Hands Institute in Westwood, NJ.

October – BIRDS: Field sketches and drawings by Francois Vuilleumier, described above.

November – Photographs by Kerrie Sansky

Kerrie Sansky was born in 1973 in Brooklyn. As a rower and photographer, she has drawn personal and artistic inspiration from the Hudson River and its surrounding towns since first moving "upstate," to Peekskill, over two decades ago. Her interest in communication and world cultures led her to her career as a bilingual Speech-Language Pathologist working with English Language Learners and their families.

Following her first solo exhibit, "Bodie: A Ghost Town in the Eastern Sierras," Kerrie pointed her camera toward home. She now lives in Piermont and her current series explores the diverse community of men and women who fish for recreation and sustenance from the Piermont Pier.

A reception is planned for Sunday, November 15, from 2 to 4 p.m. All are invited to come meet the artist and hear more about her work.

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BOOK TALK

On Sunday, October 25, at 2 p.m., Catherine Whitney will join us to discuss her newest book, *Soldiers Once: My Brother and the Lost Dreams of America's Veterans*, published this year by Da Capo Press.

Catherine lived next door to the old library for many years, but eventually moved north to Grand View. She is a prolific writer, having ghost-written and coauthored over thirty books, including several bestsellers, and four "singly-authored" books.

About *Soldiers Once*, she writes: "My brother, Jim, a Vietnam veteran whose life unraveled in the decades following the war, was buried on the eve of 9/11. He was a soldier once, proud and courageous, but in the end he lived in poverty and isolation, with little more than a drawer full of medals to show for twenty years of service. Thinking of my brother as I watched new wars being engaged in Afghanistan and Iraq, I wondered how we could keep the promise to support the troops, not just in the urgency of the battle, but in the long aftermath when they return home. Told in *Soldiers Once*, my brother's story is the centerpiece of a larger story about our nation's moral duty to heal our wounded warriors."

All are welcome to attend, and Catherine will provide refreshments following the presentation. Copies of the book will be available for purchase.

MUSEUM PASSES

Thanks to the Friends of the Library, we can now offer free passes to the American Museum of Natural His-

tory and the Guggenheim Museum. The passes are checked out (to adults – over 18) on your library card for a period of three days. They cannot be reserved, but you may call to inquire about availability and we will hold an available pass for one hour for you to pick up. Each pass has different features, but both cover general admission for family groups and some discounts at museum shops and restaurants. An explanatory brochure is available at the library desk and you can also check for more information on our website.

FOR THE CHILDREN

The best Toddler Storytime for miles around, thanks to volunteer Agnes Caniza, assisted by volunteer Judy Epstein, will continue on Monday mornings at 11 a.m. This is a great time for toddlers and their adults to get to know each other and learn about stories, songs, and what a wonderful place the library can be!

The ever-popular Halloween PUMPKIN PAINTING PARTY will be held on Wednesday, October 28, at 4:30 p.m. All materials will be provided and refreshments will be served. Space is limited, so please call to reserve as soon as possible.

Weekly art classes for children, taught by Alexis Starke, will resume on Wednesday, September 23. In these classes, children will explore self expression through the use of a variety of art media. Classes are open to children in grades 3-6 and will be held on Wednesday afternoons from 4:30-5:30, through December 9. Please call 359-4595 for more information and to register.

FIRST FRIDAY FILMS

Friday, September 4, 2009, 7:30 pm
(note: this is the beginning of the Labor Day weekend!)

MOSTLY MARTHA (2001), written and directed by Sandra Nettelbeck, and starring Martina Gedeck and Sergio Castellitto.

Friday, October 2, 2009, 7:30 pm

SIDEWAYS (2005), written and directed by Alexander Payne, and starring Paul Giamatti, Thomas Haden Church, Virginia Madsen and Sandra Oh.

Friday, November 6, 2009, 7:30 pm

THE LIVES OF OTHERS (2006), written and directed by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, starring Ulrich Muhe, Martina Gedeck and Sebastian Koch.

Friday, December 4, 2009, 7:30 pm

TENDER MERCIES (1983), written by Horton Foote, directed by Bruce Beresford, and starring Robert Duvall, Tess Harper and Betty Buckley.

The Piermont Library is located at 25 Flywheel Park West and is open Monday-Thursday, 10-8 p.m.; Friday, 12-5 p.m.; and Saturday, 12-4 p.m. We have a growing collection of new books, periodicals, and audio-visual materials and offer free wireless access to the Internet. A photocopier and fax machine may be used for a small fee. Please call 845-359-4595 for more information, and visit us frequently at www.piermontlibrary.org for updates on programs and events.

~Grace Mitchell



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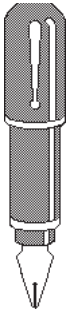
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Reader's Write

Dear Editor:

Piermonters have many questions about the cost and reasons for maintaining our own police department. I feel I am qualified to answer those questions because I've served as a trustee and the police liaison to the Village Board for the last 14 years.

Most people want to know:

Why do we need eight full-time police officers, including the chief plus one part timer?

Back in 1987, our State Dept. of Criminal Justice Services recommended that Piermont have eight full time officers. That's our present level.

Our population was 2364 then and the police handled 2,196 calls. We had six fulltime officers plus one part timer. Today, the police estimate our population is 3,000. Last year, they answered 3,588 calls, a 63 percent increase.

Keep in mind our police give us 24/7 service 365 days a year. They also provide protection on court nights and during trials, service film shoots and special events. They are here on warm weekends when as many as 6,000 tourists and transients visit the village. On their own time as volunteers, they run the Police Athletic League Youth Programs. It's one of the finest and most active in the county.

How much does having our own police actually cost and how big a percent of the budget is it?

The net cost for our police is \$1,427,908. This includes direct costs in the police section of our budget plus administrative costs, such as retirement, medical and others, less revenue offsets, including county sales tax earmarked for our police. It adds up to 29.6 percent of our budget.

Wouldn't we save a lot of money by disbanding our police and getting police service from Orangetown?

If we paid Orangetown for police

service, our savings would be just \$73,671 a year, or about five percent of our net police budget. Orangetown tells us it would greatly reduce the coverage we now enjoy including patrol, closed home checks, youth officer, bicycle patrol, foot patrol and commercial vehicle enforcement. Since Nyack has used Orangetown police service, many of its citizens complain that their safety and quality of life has suffered.

For the last 20 years our Village Board has agreed to expensive PBA contracts. Why does it keep doing it?

It doesn't have much choice. It is bound by New York State labor law that heavily favors the police. It forces us to abide by the ruling of an arbitrator when we can't agree on a contract. When Clarkstown, the largest and wealthiest bargaining entity in Rockland, agrees to a contract with the PBA, the arbitrator must take those wages and benefits into consideration when deciding what to impose on a small village like Piermont. We end up paying about the same as Clark-

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I think elected officials throughout the county have agreed to generous settlements too easily. They haven't had the discipline to say "NO!" When the first town agrees to a PBA contract, the arbitration law imposes similar settlements on all the County's police forces.

Since June 1, Piermont has been at an impasse with the PBA. The PBA negotiated other county contracts before the financial disaster hit. We are contending that we cannot afford what other towns and villages agreed to before the economy tanked. I cannot predict what the outcome will be.

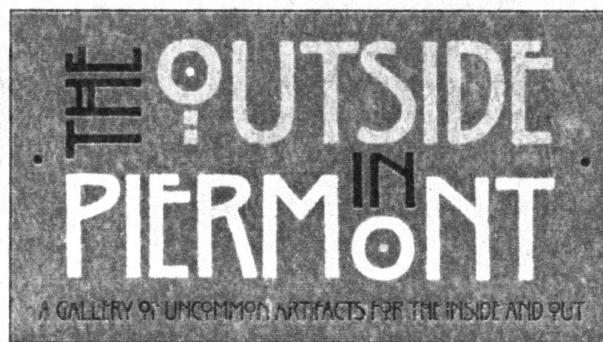
Wouldn't we save money if the Piermont Police consolidated with South Nyack and Grand View?

Consolidation of police services is a complex issue worth exploring. There are legal, labor and financial considerations as well as political obstacles requiring three mayors and village boards to agree to a plan. Until we carefully investigate this issue we won't know if it will save us anything.

Our village administration is committed to exploring consolidation and other methods to limit costs, but is determined to continue with our own police force.

Sincerely,
Fred Deva

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Parking Lot Flooding Problem—Almost Solved

Looking back through past issues of this newsletter, one can find pictures of cars standing practically submerged in floodwater in the village parking lot next to the library. This two-fold problem, caused by both storm water flooding from a blocked line and tidal forces in the lot, has gone on for decades. There have been endless discussions of what to do about it. Now, apparently, the discussions have led to a plan for a solution, which may also present an innovative model for other areas plagued by similar flooding. But don't hold your breath.

Storm water from Ash Street and part of Piermont Avenue had traveled under the parking lot and out to the river through a storm water outflow that runs under the siren tower. That pipe is well below the level of high tide and often becomes clogged with debris and buried in sand, rendering it only marginally functional.

Engineers seemingly helped solve that problem in February when they installed the last piece in a new line from Ash Street. After the village connects it with the pipe the new library installed when it was being built, it will send the storm water out through the seawall near the Flywheel Park gazebo. This storm sewer line is elevated so it won't run into the same problem as the old line.

During extremely high tides water also comes up through the storm drains and the parking lot's very porous soil. The village hopes to solve the problem by raising the level of the parking lot and installing special paving. Designed by Village Engineer Ken DeGennaro of Brooker Engineering, the innovative scheme separates the grid of parking spaces with stone filled areas planted with native grasses. Cornell Coopera-

tive Extension is helping to select them.

"Imagine cars parked nose to nose as in a typical lot," said Mayor Chris Sanders, describing how it will look. "Instead of the typical white concrete block in front of the cars, there will be a two to three foot wide trench, filled with large, perhaps even decorative, stone. These trenches will lead to islands and the islands will have low curbing around them."

The village received a grant of \$579,050, with a matching commitment

of up to 50 percent to \$225,000 to cover the cost of this plan from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). Unfortunately, in early 2009 after the financial meltdown, the state froze the money and won't say when it might become available. The project cannot go forward without the grant, says Mayor Sanders. So we may be looking at periodic flooding of the parking lot for some time to come.



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PIERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY FALL EVENTS



Sally Savage

One of a series of prints of old Piermont that photographer Sally Savage will exhibit at pre-holiday sale at the Piermont Historical Society's newly restored Erie train station from noon to 5 pm, the weekend of October 10 and 11.

Sat., Sept. 19 ~ Thank You Al Bartley

Come and make Al wish he didn't retire. Free hotdogs, sausage, soda, etc. We need Pot Luck desserts & side dishes. Must call 398-1737 for reservations (we want to have enough food for everyone)

Noon to 3pm at the Train Station ~ Rain date ~ Sept. 20

Tues., Oct. 6 ~ "Morse Code and the Railroad"

Communication before Blackberry. A Lecture and demonstration by John Welch

\$5.00 admission ~ Light Refreshments

7pm at the Train Station

Sat./Sun., Oct. 10 & 11

A Retrospective Exhibit of Photographs by Piermont Resident Sally Savage

Historical photos from her collection will also be available.

At the Train Station ~ 12 noon to 5pm each day

Donations appreciated ~ light refreshments

In October, November, and December, the Piermont Historical Society will host three events relating to Piermont and WWII:

Wed., Oct 26 "WWII and the Artist" a lecture and display by Mark Waller

The focus will be on select Rockland County Artists and the effect of their war experience as seen through their works.

At the Train Station ~ 7pm admission \$5.00 ~ light refreshments

Sat. Nov. 14 - "A 1940's USO Dance" with Live Band and Vocalist

Coffee & Donuts Dress Appropriate period dress
Others \$25.00 per person ~ Veterans in uniform FREE
at Piermont Reformed Church 7:30 - 10:30

Sat., Dec. 12 - "Camp Shanks, Piermont, and WWII Embarkations"

Lecture by Rockland Historian Jerry Donnellan
Piermont Village Hall ~ 3pm ~ Admission \$5.00 ~ light refreshments

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Those Immigrants Among Us continued from page 1

job. When a horse escaped to go for a swim in the nearby reservoir, Cain lassoed him to bring him back to shore. Back home in El Salvador, it would have been all in a day's work. But in our neighborhood, it was awe-inspiring.

Another La Jolla native, Anna Linares, 35, remembers that it took her two months to get to the U.S. She paid the coyotes \$5,000, but she was ill prepared to walk through the desert without any food. The bus trip through Guatemala took one week. Then she hiked through Mexico for two weeks, often collapsing hungry under the trees to sleep.

Anna first started working in La Jolla at the age of 12, making cigarettes along side of her mother. By 15 she was married, and at 16 her first child was born. Ten years later, Anna was escaping to the US, leaving her two sons with her mother. The coyotes didn't abuse her but the journey was hard. "At one point, we stayed in a little room with no clothes, no shower, and no food for one week," she remembers.

Once she arrived at the Diplomat, Anna held down three different jobs, scrimping and saving enough to bring her oldest son to the US. When he arrived, she was able to get Medicaid to pay for his immunizations so he could attend public school.

Just this year Anna managed to save enough to pay the coyotes—the fee has skyrocketed to \$7,000—to bring her second son to live with her. Weeks of frantic worry went by and she did not hear from him. Finally, he arrived by van to Long Island in the middle of the night and Anna had a tearful reunion. "Look at how thin he is," she said, showing

people his wrists. After a few days of rest, her son found work in a local restaurant.

Today, Cain regales listeners with success stories of his fellow immigrants. George, who once lived at the Diplomat and started working at Cornetta's restaurant, is now building houses and renting them. He owns apartment buildings and a bar in Newburgh, NY.

Many others have become successful businessmen. His cousin Abel owns three houses in Sparkill and a pizza parlor and a tile company. Another man worked at the Portofino Restaurant in Piermont before becoming a chef at the Holiday Inn in Orangeburg. Others have their own landscaping businesses.

Cain dreams of having his own restaurant. He had a bar in Spring Valley that was fraught with problems. Late one night muggers robbed him, making off with the night's receipts. Another time they fined him \$5,000 when his bartender served alcohol to a very tall young lady. It turned out that she was only 19, and working undercover with the police. He managed to sell the business and get out.

For now, Cain still works at a stable and as a gardener. His wife is a cleaning lady. Their 10-year-old son Caincita, (little Cain) attends local schools. Cain likes to show that he is somewhat of a success by driving a Cadillac Escalade. The car serves as an inspiration to the young men who wait for work at the mini mart.

A year ago, the new owners of the Diplomat forced the remaining Spanish-speaking residents to find other

places to live. The Diplomat became the upscale Overlook. Cain thinks the people who live there now look down on the young Spanish speaking men waiting in front of the Mini Mart. He thinks they'd like them to go away.

Cain, unsurprisingly, would like to see umbrella tables where the men could sit and have a coffee from the store. And he wonders why there can't be a community bulletin board so that people looking for help could post a sign offering jobs to those who are searching.

And why not? Like our Spanish-speaking neighbors, most of our ancestors endured hardships to establish themselves in the US.

~PJ Mouquin

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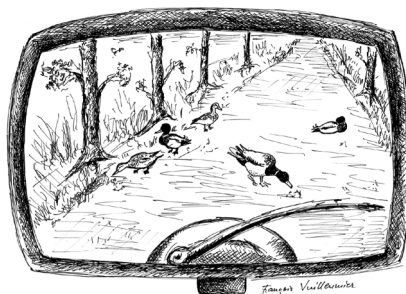
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Claudette Scheffold
Kim Scheffold Stiefel

Birds On The Pier continued from page 3

or two to rest and refuel during their migration from the Arctic to points south, perhaps even to South America. They are Semipalmated Plovers



(like small Killdeers but with only one breast-band), Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, and Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, all of them wary and nervous, ready to take off at the slightest disturbance, real or imagined.

Of course the Pier has rarities. These are what seasoned birders are after when, seeing the binoculars around your neck, they ask: "Seen any good birds today"? For me any bird is a good

bird, whether rare or common, and so I never know what to answer. The list of uncommon species is long. It includes the Avocet from the west, the Caspian Tern from somewhere, the Skimmer from the coast, or a European bird or two, like the Lesser Black-backed Gull. What winged creatures will be coming to the Pier this winter? Ducks, for sure, like the Canvasbacks that sleep during the day (they feed at night). Another Snowy Owl? I don't think so: the Lemmings they like had a poor season.

When you go to the Pier, bring along binoculars and a field guide. (And remember: every bird is a good bird.)

~François Vuilleumier

Dr. Vuilleumier, the Piermonter, who wrote and illustrated this article knows his birds. The American Museum of Natural History recently published his encyclopedic, 744-page, 6-pound, *Birds of North America*. A Curator Emeritus, he is former Chairman of the museum's Department of Ornithology.



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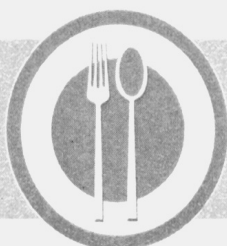
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Many Bridges Over Troubled Waters continued from page 5

century on a site dating back to the 17th century when Kings Highway in Tappan led across Sparkill Creek, then called the Slote, to what is now Rockland Road, the bridge is considered to be a historical rarity and the only one of its kind in New York State. However, many if not most residents of the Village have never seen the actual bridge, as it is well hidden from the road and only visible after a scramble to the base of the nearby waterfall.

However, its uniqueness has not translated into repair funds. As things stand, the village is responsible for the upkeep of the bridge, not Rockland County. The reason given is that the structure is not a proper bridge but simply a "culvert" because its span is so short. So unlike the draw-bridge, the cost of rehabilitation is squarely in the village's pocket. To this reasoning Piermonters cry foul, complaining that the bridge would not have deteriorated to this degree if it had not taken such a pounding from trucks when contractors were putting up Piermont Landing. During this period the County was rebuilding the Army Bridge at what seemed like a leisurely pace.

But there is reason for optimism. Sylvia Welch, the village's grant writer, has already obtained \$200,000 in federal funds and is expecting more. She has talked with engineering firms and believes they can reopen the bridge for as little as \$650,000, which she considers a reasonable shortfall. Also

Mayor Chris Sanders is optimistic. "I'm sure we can get it done," he told the Newsletter.

The Mayor intends to meet with Brooker Engineering to explore a schedule of stabilization and staged remediation. He'll also be asking Congressman Elliott Engel (an ardent supporter of historical causes) and Senator Charles Schumer for bridge repair money. Finally, the Piermont Historical Society intends to begin a campaign to raise funds from private and public sources. Part of this activity will be to meet with those residents most affected by this situation, according to spokesman Bill Elson.

"The village as a community has pulled together to solve problems and this is reason enough to do so again," commented Richard Esnard, Piermont Historical Society Board member. "We can do this."

~Bob Cone

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Fall Leaf Pick-up

The fall leaf pick-up program begins the week of October 2 and will continue through December 3. Put all loose leaves out at the properties' edge.

Please do not block sidewalks with leaves. This presents an unsafe condition for pedestrians.

Leaf piles should be clear of brush, rocks, sticks and debris.

Piermonters can pick up biodegradable bags at the Village Hall (359-1258) or the Highway Garage (359-1717) during normal working hours.

We encourage the use of biodegradable bags to protect our environment. We will not accept leaves put out in plastic bags!

The Piermont DPW will be installing recycling drop-off stations along Main

Street in the near future to encourage recycling in the business district.

~Al Bartley, Piermont's Department of Public Works Supervisor

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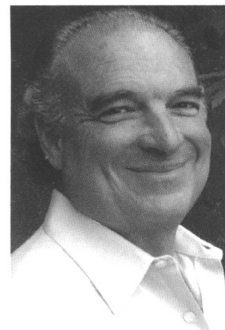
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