

FALL / WINTER 1968

# PIERMONT NEWSLETTER

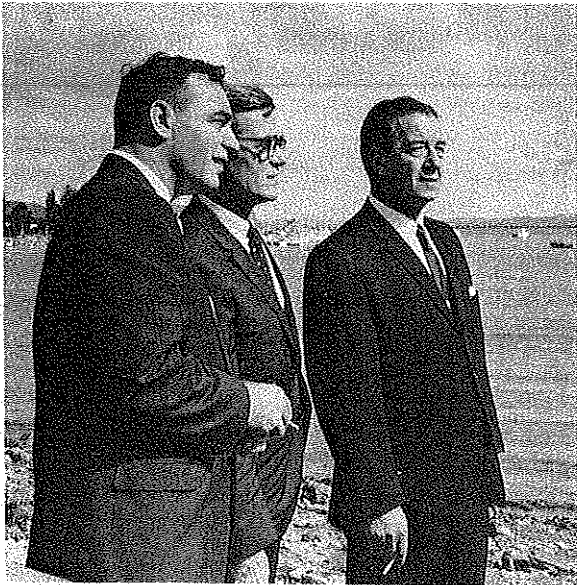
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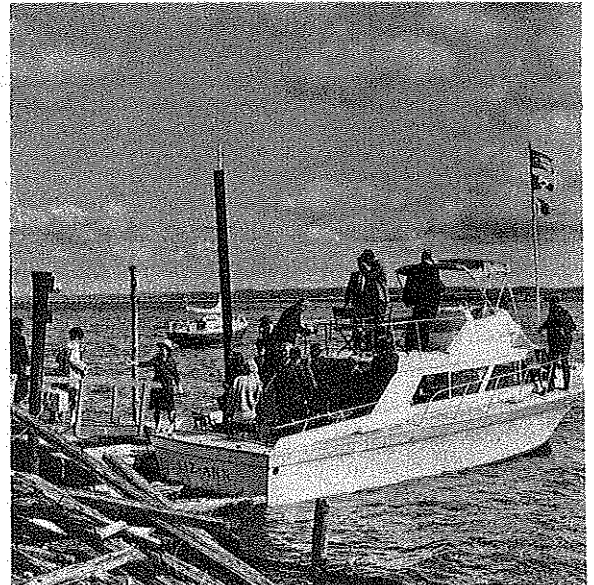
INSPECTION TOUR of waterfront led lawmakers and agency officials through marina area. At K of C, above, Fred Lacker told of silting problem.

## PIERMONT SPARKS HUDSON RIVER DEVELOPMENT DRIVE

A new movement, launched in Piermont, to stop the spoilation of Tappan Zee Bay and to redevelop the recreational and economic potential of its west shore villages is gaining support in Albany and Washington.



MAYOR DiFrancesca points out problems to State legislators St. Lawrence and Mondello.



BOATS provided by Piermont toured the bay, then took visitors to Nyack for hearing on river problems.

Building a breakwater at Piermont to protect pleasure boat moorings from Northeast gales, dredging of the Bay, and cutting a sluice under the mile-long mole to halt further silting of the Hudson River are among the projects that may receive Federal and State support. Another part of the overall plan calls for clearing the flats south of the mole of the accumulation of many years of waste sludge from the paper mill that is killing off marine plant and animal life in the marshes and lower Sparkill Creek.

Following an official inspection trip on Sept. 12 that began in Piermont, a flotilla of five boats carried public officials and concerned citizens to a public hearing in Nyack of two joint committees of the State Legislature. Piermont Mayor Bo DiFrancesca and Rockland Assemblyman Joseph St. Lawrence followed up the hearing with a trip to Washington on Oct. 1. There they discussed the problems of Tappan Zee Bay with Congressman John Dow, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Barnhill and Government engineers.

A similar meeting will be held soon in Albany with the leaders of the State Legislature and representatives of several State agencies concerned with the river and its shore communities, including the Pure Waters Commission and the Hudson River Valley Commission. Mayor DiFrancesca met on Oct. 24 with Paul Mundt, chairman of the Rockland County Board of Supervisors, to set up an apparatus through which local elected public officials will press in Albany and Washington for action. The Mayor believes this will prevent this effort from degenerating from talk and promises to delay and inaction, as have some previous efforts.

As soon as Supervisor Mundt appoints the Rockland committee, which will include the Mayors of Piermont, Grand View, South Nyack, Nyack and Upper Nyack along with other officials, it will schedule conferences in Albany and Washington. One of the immediate aims is to coordinate the efforts of 17 different State and Federal agencies whose responsibilities include the problems of the Lower Hudson. There is now a jumble of overlapping and sometimes conflicting plans, inaction resulting from a lack of clearly defined jurisdictions, and much confusion.

The hearing on Sept. 12 was held by the Joint Legislative Committee on Commerce, Economic Development, Tourism and Motorboats, of which Assemblyman Ferdinand J. Mondello of the Bronx is chairman, and the Joint Legislative Committee on Town Laws, of which Assemblyman St. Lawrence is chairman. More than 100 persons heard 22 speakers, representing all segments of the river communities from small boat men to business interests and marine and geological scientists.

Theodore Merrill of the Piermont Civic Association, who spoke as representative of the Hudson River Yacht Racing Association and the Tappan Zee Sailing Association, called for clarifying legislation to end the overlapping and conflicting of

existing official agencies. He suggested also that "knocking together some heads" of members of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission might get them to provide launching ramps, boat storage sheds and other improvements on public riverfront lands "instead of only cops with badges and billy clubs who kick any boatman off the beach if he dares to bring his craft in for a landing."

The new effort to end deterioration and to restore the advantages of what has long been one of the most beautiful and historic sections of the Hudson River originated with Mayor DiFrancesca and Assemblyman St. Lawrence. They revived local sentiment and persuaded leaders of the Legislature that a public hearing was needed. The Mayor and the Assemblyman had invited key citizens and public officials to a dinner meeting at the Fort Comfort Inn, a few nights before the Nyack hearing, to discuss the problems and some ideas for presentation at the hearing.

The public hearing, which received wide coverage in the local and metropolitan press, won support from lawmakers far beyond the shores of the Tappan Zee. Brooklyn Assemblyman Lawrence Murphy, who holds the important post of coordinator of joint legislative committees, told Mayor DiFrancesca after the hearing that he would use all his power in Albany to whip up needed action. Assembly Speaker Moses Weinstein, from Queens County, will meet with the newly created Rockland committee, to discuss State aid. Assemblyman Mondello, who is canvassing the several State agencies to see how the proposed Piermont break-water can be built. He has intimated also that the Legislature will take measures for a joint effort by New York, New Jersey and the Federal Government on the Hudson River problems.

Congressman Dow, who was represented at the Nyack hearing by his administrative assistant, has said he will hold conferences with the Corps of Engineers and the Department of the Interior. The Corps of Engineers, which would do the dredging, is expected to begin a study soon of current flow and silting. It is just two years since Interior Secretary Udall made a personal tour of inspection of the local waterfront, where he expressed horror at the evidences of silting, pollution and other deterioration, and promised early Federal aid.

The new movement intends to see that the promised relief gets under way.

## PIERMONT ZONING LAWS READY

The long-awaited public hearing on the new zoning ordinances for Piermont will take place on Monday, November 18, at 8:30 p.m. in the Village Hall. Meanwhile, the proposed zones are on view in a set of maps of the village hanging in the Board Room of the Village Hall. They can be viewed weekdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and many evenings. A phone call to the Village Clerk at the Hall will determine hours of evening viewing: the number is EL 9-1258.

## PIERMONT HISTORICAL BUILDING SURVEY

### URNS UP SOME EARLY TOWN HOUSES

The Piermont Historic Building Committee is completing its survey of the Sparkill creek area which was once Piermont's main street. The Committee was most impressed by the sound construction and quality of these early houses. Although the buildings have undergone many changes and in some cases a lot of the original architectural detail has been removed, some of the houses clearly show their origin as small but quite elegant 19th century townhouses.

The usual groundfloor plan of these homes originally consisted of two rooms: a large front parlor, and, what seems to be a local characteristic, a quite narrow room behind. These opened off the front hall running from the street door to the garden door. Kitchens were built either in outbuildings separate from the house or attached in shed fashion at the back.

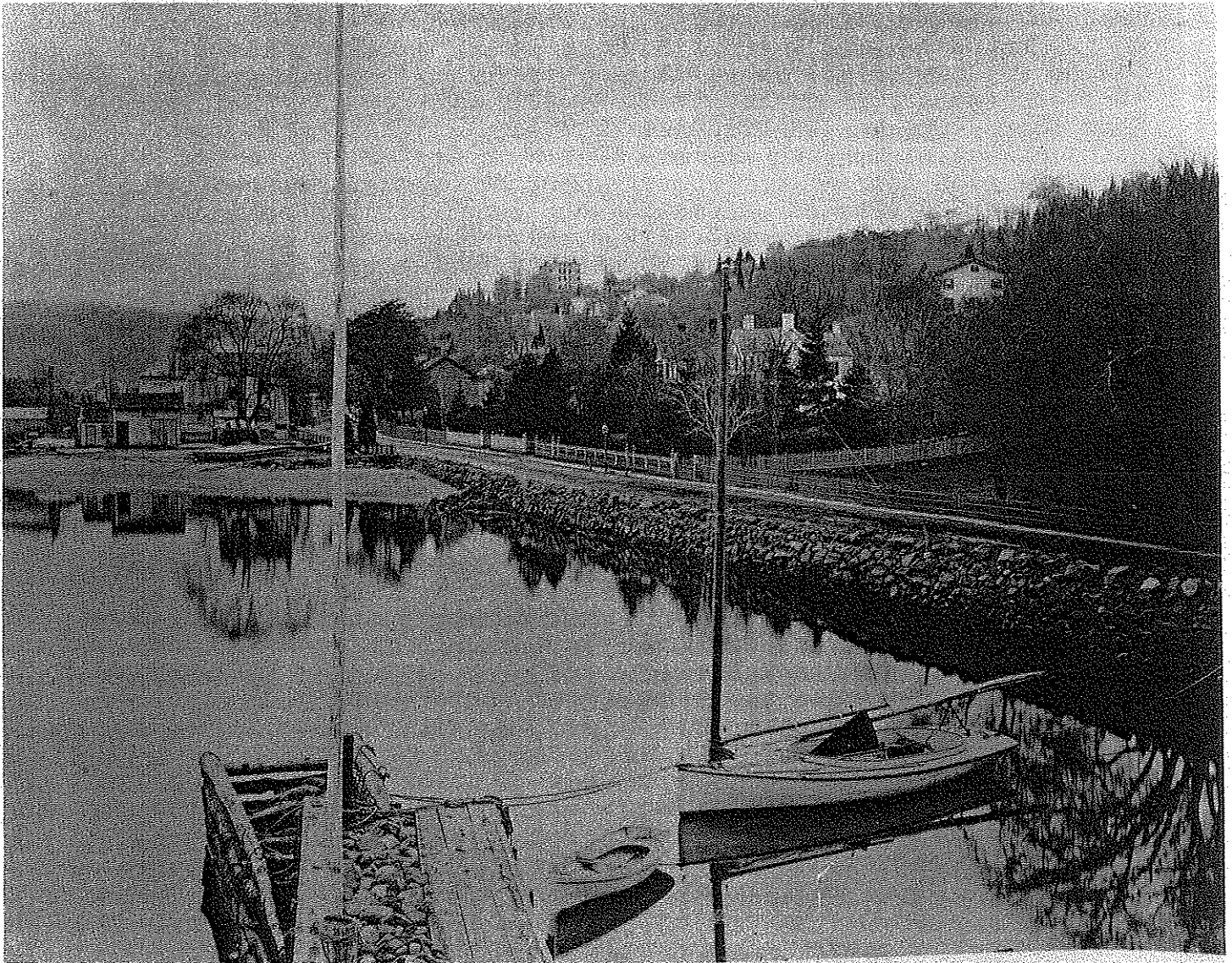
In most of the houses, rooms have been added to make new kitchens or extra bedrooms, and in the course of expansion roof lines have been changed. The houses were generally clapboard, although there are a few brick houses of this period of Flemish bond construction. The fieldstone houses in the area were built in an earlier time.

The Historic Building Committee is photographing the exteriors of the houses and some particularly fine examples of woodwork or beam construction.

After surveying the Ferdon Avenue side of the creek, Main Street buildings of early origin will be catalogued.

CAN YOU NAME THE HOTEL?

This photograph from the collection of the Piermont Historical Society, shows Piermont in its "white fence" days. Fort Comfort was yet to be built on the spit of land in the foreground. At the center, the home of J.W. Blauvelt stands where the old high school is now; and at the top center of the picture is the big hotel that stood at the corner of Ash Street and Piermont Place. Do you know the date of the picture, or the name of the old hotel? If you can shed any light, please call Philip DeLorenzo, president of the P.H.S. That group, incidentally, has the history of our village in its keeping, and needs your dollars for support. Five dollars buys a supporting membership; one dollar is for a contributing membership. Supporting members will receive a free copy of the history of Piermont published 20 years ago. Send dues to Mr. DeLorenzo in Piermont.



## TESTIMONIAL DINNER HONORS SAL CONIGLIARO

It was only natural that Sal Conigliaro was on the PCA's first Executive Committee (1966-67); it's his style to work for his community. And it was also only natural that all Sal's friends honored him formally at a testimonial dinner at the Ripples of Rockland on Nov. 16.

Sponsor of the dinner was the Giovanni de Verrazano Lodge of the Sons of Italy. Sal has held the office of venerable in the lodge for 19 years, and his wife, Anna, was the first woman to ever join.

Sal has been one of the most active members of Piermont Rotary Club where renewal of Piermont's main street area has been one of his most persistent interests. A plan that he and Frank Scolare presented to the village, to put regularly placed holes in the new sidewalk for flag stanchions, has been adopted.

But of all Sal's activities on behalf of the village, none is so well known as his eight year campaign to persuade the United States Post Office to deliver Piermont mail. Sal won, and that's why we all get home delivery.

Perhaps not so well known is another Conigliaro campaign -- to protect "his tree". It's the one outside his shop on Main St., and for years was the sole surviving greenery on the block. The PCA planted more trees to match it, but because of Sal's efforts to protect his tree against trucks, dogs, bulldozers, careless drivers and initial carvers, it stands taller than all the rest, a symbol of his well directed determination.

## TAPPAN ZEE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WILL OPEN IN FEBRUARY

When the S. Orangetown school board decided to use the 40-acre site between 9W and the old Erie RR right of way in Piermont for a new elementary school, it decided the beautiful land deserved exceptional architectural attention. It got it. And the resulting plan, a large main building connected by breezeways to a series of single story hexagonal units containing classrooms is an exciting concept. In February, it will be open for business.

Mr. Ernest Tabo, elementary school principal, gave the Newsletter a quick preview of the new school while workmen were completing interior details. There are a total of 18 classrooms, all with lots of windows that have stunning views of the surrounding countryside - fields, river, woods and valley. The rooms

are shaped like pie slices, with sloping ceilings. Many have five walls. Movable desks will allow great freedom of classroom arrangements.

The design of the school reflects the needs of the team teaching and grade grouping system that the South Orangetown school system is adopting. Each section of the school has its own planning room in which the teaching teams can confer. The main building of the school contains the administrative section with the principal's office, main conference room and library - an instructional center that has film and record facilities in addition to books.

Other facilities include music and art rooms, a large gymnasium and a "Cafetorium" that doubles as a cafeteria and auditorium. The school will use the surrounding land as a nature study area. Whiton Field, to the south, provides more than ample play and sports space.

Access to the new school will be somewhat easier than getting to the old one next to the viaduct. There will be a walking path from the northeast connecting to Crescent Street and Piermont Place so that children will not have to walk south on 9W. Unfortunately, children who live south or west of the school will still have to navigate dangerous roads. As before, children in Kindergarten through 3rd grade who live more than 1/2 mile from the school will have bus transportation, as will 4th graders and up who live farther than one mile. There will be no changes in the transportation arrangements this year. New transportation distance measurements will apply in Fall 1969.

#### SIDEWALK WORK TO CONTINUE AND A SEWER PROJECT IS COMING

New sidewalks for the entire village: that is the aim of the sidewalk construction project now underway, according to Mayor A.J. DiFrancesca. Now that nearly all of Piermont Avenue has the new walks, work will soon be ended because of cold weather, and be resumed in the Spring. Hopefully, next year will see the completion of the project, the Mayor said.

Another major construction project, soon to start, is the joint Piermont-Grandview-Nyacks sewer main, in cooperation with the Town of Orangetown. Piermont will receive \$20,000 for the use of its right-of-way along the former Erie Railroad tracks. The forced main will be laid along this route and be re-graded. The Piermont Civic Association is on record as favoring a walking path from Ash Street north to the Grandview line, when the project has been completed.

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Piermont seems brighter than ever. Over the last few years, new sewers have been built, Sparkill Creek is cleaner, the Brookside game preserve has been established, the ice-skating rink operates each winter, streets have been resurfaced, and new curbs and sidewalks have been installed. The veteran's memorial was built, trees were planted in the business district, the playground at Kane Park is being improved, and the new school is almost finished.

New homes are going up and, even more important, older houses are being modernized and improved in every part of the village. With a new bank and a new restaurant building, there is the beginning of new vitality in the business section. In sum, a lot has happened.

All these improvements result from efforts by the village board, village employees, taxpayers, homeowners, and civic groups.

The Piermont Civic Association, under the leadership of Robert Bradbury, made a contribution by establishing the Thrift Shop to raise money for local nonprofit services, planting trees downtown, helping to refurbish Kane Park, providing a forum for discussing public issues and problems, and getting a local newsletter underway.

But there is still a lot more to do. The PCA can help support such local programs already underway as:

- \* Improving the waterfront and getting help to solve the silting problem.
- \* Helping attract new specialty stores and service establishments to revitalize the business section.
- \* Protecting the Erie right of way and preserving it as a unique traffic free walkway.
- \* Backing the Brookside Game Preserve and others who want to clean up and protect Sparkill Creek.
- \* General village beautification including burial of some utility facilities and perhaps a screen of trees between the business section and Continental Can will mean a lot of cooperative effort.

Few of these objectives are immediately attainable. But if the recent past is any clue, they may be reached a lot faster than many of us think. By keeping alert to these problems and taking advantage of all possibilities for their solution, the PCA can help.



That there will be a lot of opportunities to help the village there is no doubt, either in cooperation with the village government or independently, since we have great freedom of action.

Some smaller projects we might take on in the near future include providing park benches and landscaped spots throughout the village, helping with teenager and senior citizens recreation centers, and pressing for the razing of deteriorating and dangerous structures.

This ambitious list of projects will take effort and money. But none are impossible and I believe most will be accomplished in the next ten years. The Piermont Civic Association can make an important contribution, and we invite every resident to the Village to join with us in helping to make Piermont an even more beautiful village on the Hudson.

Dale L. Hiestand  
President Piermont Civic Assn.

#### THRIFT SHOP OPENS AGAIN

The Tappan Zee Thrift Shop re-opened in September after a brief summer vacation, during which time the exterior was painted -- a job donated by Leonard DeMaio. Valerie Peterson is finding time in her busy schedule to be the new Shop Manager; she would like to remind donors that articles to be sold must be in good condition. The pricing committee has found that a great deal of unsalable clothing has been brought in; rather than discard it entirely the Thrift Shop Committee has decided to send this merchandise on to the Goodwill Industries, who have the facilities to repair or in some manner reuse such items -- in the process Goodwill provides jobs for many people, including the blind and otherwise handicapped. Hattie Meyers is taking these collections to the Goodwill in New York City.

The Thrift Shop will celebrate its second birthday on December 10th; during the two years of its operation it has been successful far beyond the original expectations -- indeed, it has contributed approximately \$10,000 to the participating organizations. Our PCA sponsored Thrift Shop is really unique in the county in the way it helps service organizations.

Volunteer hours are just as important as donations. There is much work to be done in and for the Thrift Shop: volunteers are urgently needed during the pricing periods, the open hours, for work on publicity, and for making collections.

With the Christmas season approaching, clean out those top shelves and bring in bric-a-brac and toys and decorations for Christmas sale -- remember that the decoration you don't want to use another year may be new and exciting to someone else.

The current hours of the Thrift Shop are:

Tues. 10 - 1 Open, 1 - 4 pricing  
Wed. 10 - 1 Pricing  
Thurs. 10 - 4 Open  
Sat. 10 - 4 Open

Donations may be received during any of the open or pricing hours. Any able volunteers who wish to contribute some time in a good cause -- both the Thrift Shop and your favorite local organization -- should call Mrs. Peterson, at EL 9-5753.

#### LIBRARY BOARD HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING, ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

At the annual Library meeting in October, Mr. Clarence Branch was re-elected to serve another term on the Library Board. The new officers of the Board are Mr. Ewan MacQueen, President; Mrs. Theodore Merrill, Vice-President; Mr. George Keane, Treasurer; Mr. Clarence Branch, Secretary. Mr. Frank Bang, Mrs. Donald Blauhut, Mrs. George Bryan, Mr. George Voorhis and Mrs. Arthur Watkins continue as members of the Board.

Mrs. Chute, our Librarian, reported at the annual meeting: "We have increased our circulation to 10,118 in the first 9 months of 1968. That exceeds last year's total."

A report from the new Board President Ewan MacQueen to the residents of Piermont reflects on the achievements and the problems which these figures suggest: "The Piermont Library has developed a plan of service which introduces our schoolchildren to the Library, teaches them how to use its reference facilities for their schoolwork and how to enjoy its collection for recreational reading. In addition, film programs and story hours reinforce for them the concept that the library is useful in many ways. The response to our efforts show that here, indeed, we are meeting the needs of the community.

For adults, we offer access through state systems to virtually any printed material. We also sponsor information programs on community affairs, cultural programs and evenings of entertainment. It is more difficult to judge the success of these endeavors.

"The library's only goal is to provide whatever educational and recreational material the community needs. Two things are

necessary to provide these: money and volunteer time. With even the most frugal spending of the funds available we still face a hard financial situation.

The school district tax passed a few years ago didn't solve all our money problems -- it amounts to \$4,415 annually. Our 1969 budget will be in the vicinity of \$15,000. Direct state funds have been virtually eliminated and county aid amounts to less than 3% of our needs. The Village of Piermont will provide the balance, through public funds and private gifts. Thanks to volunteer work, expenses for paid staff amount to only 21% of expenditures. 40% of our budget goes for books, records and magazines. The generosity of the many women of this community who work for the library can scarcely be measured, without them it would cease to function.

"It is my sincere wish that you will continue to support our library by using it, by contributing to its fund drives and by sharing with the Board your suggestions for improving it."

Ewan MacQueen, President

#### SCHEDULED FALL AND WINTER ACTIVITIES AT THE LIBRARY

<u>Children</u>	Story Hours: Wednesday 10 a.m. 3-5 yrs. Coffee served for mothers
	4 p.m. 5-7 yrs.
	Films: Wednesday 4 p.m. Nov. 6, 13, 20, Dec. 11, Dec. 18, Jan. 8, 22
	Book Week: Nov. 17-23 Film Nov. 20th, Annual Pet Show Nov. 23rd
<u>Adults</u>	Nov. 20th, 8:30 p.m. <u>The Hudson River Sloop</u> , slides and lecture. Music programs are tentatively planned, volunteer organizers needed.

#### TRIPS WITH TARIQ

This is the second installment of a series identifying the many walking tours that are available to the curious citizen of Piermont. We have more than our share of places to wander along, and of curious citizens too, for both of which I am thankful. Tariq is the dog. Tariq is a curious name for a dog. But if you have listened to his midnight challenge to the entrance light on the Merrill family's home or even his just-before-bedtime bark at a particular streetlamp in Ardsley you will swear both to and about his curious nature.

THE PIER, which stretches out a mile into the Hudson like a great finger pointing forever to the birthplace of the sun (or a streetlamp in Ardsley, as the case may be), as everyone knows was once the east end of the Erie Railroad. For those who missed this tale, I recommend The New Magazine, a delightful local publication which is no longer functioning, and a shame that it isn't. But all copies are on hand in the Piermont library.

The Pier may be reached either by car or on foot by going along Paradise Avenue, which can be picked up at the traffic light at the south end of Main Street at the Kane Children's Playground. Follow Paradise Avenue right up to the gate of the paper mill. Make a right, following the fence, on the macadam road towards the river until you are confronted by another gate, painted yellow. Park your car discreetly and proceed on foot either through the open gate or around the closed gate. You will now find the village dump on your right. Ignore it.

With the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, grasp both nostrils firmly and proceed along this well paved country road, between the walls of waving bullrushes for a couple of hundred yards where an "S" turn in the road will present to you, quite unexpectedly, a great panorama of water and sky and mountains and small villages clustered along the great river's banks in all directions. At this point you can usually breathe normally.

The pier now is no more than a dozen feet wider than the road right to its very end, where it widens and a good modern cement dock is to be found which is marked "Private." It is used mostly for fishing and sightseeing and occasionally for mooring Lamont Geophysical's Survey Ships. The ships and their work make a fascinating story and I recommend that you raise the question the next time you run into John Chute at the Library.

This Pier, which has no peer, is no pier at all in the Atlantic City sense in that it consists of very solid terra which is decidedly firma for its full one mile length. The south side is sparsely lined with native mulberry, willow and poplar trees, with low thicket and bush on both sides and with wild flowers everywhere in season. Phlox were still in bloom on the last Sunday in October. On that day I watched a Downy Woodpecker consuming the seed berries that form the dramatic red clusters that tip the branches of the Staghorn Sumac at this time of year. Here and there are foot trails that cut through the narrow band of brush that separates road from water and obviously lead to the best fishing spots.

Any point along the pier is a good one for resting for a moment. Once seated, with your attention directed to Piermont and Mount Nebo, it is easy enough to grasp the emotion that caused Hendrick Hudson to turn his ship shoreward as he too gazed across the Tappan Zee and sighted an earlier small village with its redskinned citizens living out their lives very much in the pattern of our own day to day activity.

But getting back to the mundane and to the noseholding instruction in an earlier paragraph. The odor which will confront you as you start your walk comes both from our dump, and the small canal on your left, which, screened by the bullrushes, carries the effluence of the paper mill out into the river. This turgid stream of waste seeping out from the bowels of this great production organism (heavens, Emma, not literally) was once an essential element of paper making at some stage of technology.

Thinking about our garbage disposal problems, I saw an article in the papers to the effect that someone has identified an extraordinary advantage in homeowners packaging garbage in plastic bags where an open dump is the disposal method. The odor of the decomposing waste supposedly stays inside the bag instead of wandering around the community. Suppose the Village had a plastic bag ordinance. Perhaps each family might have a particular color of bag.

I see many advantages to individual bag colors. At a PCA meeting, when two citizens meet, what better opening query than the three friendly words, "What's your bag?" Think of walking out to see your own Baby Blue Bag nestled out there between the mountain and the mill in that great multi-colored pile! Think of the catch in the throat, the prideful swelling in the chest! Or the summer evenings watching the returning Day Liners making their "Daily Dump Detour"... Or the Sunday morning walk on the pier, past the new hotels, where the old mill once stood, past the parking areas and tourists toward the great neon sign on the old Lamont dock blinking out the message "The Only Psychedelic Dump in the World". Maybe bullrushes, ducks, downy woodpeckers and sumac aren't really necessary at all.

Bill Daly

#### LETTER TO THE NEWSLETTER

Editor:

A beauty spot in Piermont keeps turning into a mudhole. The Sparkill is dammed in the Mine Hole district, and every dry spell lasting a week or more sees the water behind the dam disappear, leaving a foul, rubbish-strewn mudhole replete with insects and dead fish. But drought is not the main reason for the pond running dry. The pumping station operated by Continental Can never fails to pump, even when the water is far below the level of the dam. The company built the dam with the understanding that it would create a water reservoir and the pumping would not interfere with the normal flow of water in the Creek. It is obvious that the company is not living up to its agreement. The

law is that nobody can interfere with the natural flow of water in any stream. Is not Continental Can subject to the same rules as the rest of us?

Sincerely,  
Robert Cane

THIRD ANNUAL DINNER

PIERMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION

AT CORNETTA'S RESTAURANT, MONDAY DECEMBER 9, 1968 7:00 PM

For reservations and tickets call:

Mrs. Cynthia Crippin, River Rd	EL 9-1911
Mrs. Wanda Hiestand, Hudson Terrace	EL 9-4049
Mrs. Molly Hunt, Franklin St	EL 9-0137
Mrs. Frances Pierson, Piermont Ave	EL 9-1610

Buffet dinner - the marvelous Cornetta special \$4.50 per person.  
(For Senior Citizens \$4.00)

Note to new residents: The PCA welcomes all Piermonters, and the Association hopes new residents in particular will come to meet their neighbors at this informal annual occasion. The food is good, the speeches are short, and the mood is joyful.




## COMMUNITY PLAY SCHOOL NEEDS HELP

A fund-raising drive for the benefit of the Community Play-school is to be undertaken this month, headed by Mr. and Mrs. Carl Dahlgren. The school, which operates on a five-day basis, has an annual budget of \$4,300 and hopes to make most of this in its annual drive.

Two paid teachers and a number of volunteer teacher-assistants meet the needs of the thirty-three children enrolled in its Monday to Friday, nine-to-eleven program, in the parsonage of the Episcopal Church on Valentine Avenue, Sparkill. Most of that enrollment comes from Piermont, and Mrs. Dahlgren remarked that Piermont's residents were generous in their donations in last year's drive. The aim this year is for \$4,000.

For those who wish to donate toys or hours to the school, the particular needs listed by Mrs. Jayne McCloskey, school director and teacher, are for puzzles, children's chairs, easels or table toys; or for volunteer help in the form of carpool drivers or teacher assistants. Address the Community Playschool, Box 32, Sparkill.

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**EMPORIUM**



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TREE TRIMMINGS, PRESERVES, GINGER BREAD MEN, COOKIES, COGNES,  
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FOR YOUR SHOPPING CONVENIENCE THE EMPORIUM WILL BE OPEN EVERY  
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DAYS FROM 10:00 AM TO 5:30 PM THROUGHOUT THE CHRISTMAS SEASON.

GLORIA & DON BLAUHUT, PROPRIETORS

914 EL 9-0999

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