

The Piermont Newsletter

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Paradise in Piermont

How beautiful is this place? Settled over 200 years ago at the edge of what is now the Piermont Marsh, Bogertown, at the east end of Paradise Avenue is populated by a handful of families living in some of Piermont's oldest homes. Among their neighbors are scores of red-winged blackbirds, pairs of foxes, herons, turtles, and the occasional mink.

To the south, winding its way through Phragmites, is the confluence of the Hudson River and the Sparkill Creek. For this enclave, it has been decades since the river was "out there." It has become a more frequent visitor at high tide, climbing outdoor stairs and bubbling up with groundwater in basements.

There are 9 houses at this end of Paradise Avenue, and one lot with pilings anticipating a structure. The owner expects to begin building in the Spring. A couple of the homes are for sale, and a couple of them have renters. Members of the Landy family live here. Three generations of the Platt family and two generations of the Tapley family are their neighbors, along with geophysicist Klaus Jacob and his wife, artist Isabella Jacob. The PBS program, "Sinking Cities," features Klaus's sea level rise expertise. Piermonsters in low lying areas pay close attention to his local flood data emails. His is the moving portrait (below) of his watery neighborhood, taken from the "widow's walk" atop his home in 2016.

Bogertown is full of history. In the 1970s, Margaret English, an actress turned house restorer, took on a number of the homes here – a sort of Paradise Revival. Margaret penned a story of both neighborhood history and her adventures in renovation for her book "The Brick House." There is lots of local lore at this

end of Paradise, as well. Like the story of the amusement park ride from an earlier era, now swallowed by the marsh and said to be somewhere out past the end of the street. But mostly, the community talks about their love of the place.

Hurricane Sandy hit Bogertown hard five years ago. The marsh held back pummeling waves and debris, but not the storm surge high water. Afterwards, one house was taken down, one was raised up. That's not a viable option for a cluster of the oldest homes on the north side of the street. So, homeowners moved utilities to higher floors, and replaced sheetrock and cabinetry with impermeable materials.

How are you doing, we asked the community. "This is a such a special place – the light, the quiet, the birds – is there a more beautiful place to live?" asks Lisa Powers. Her lovely home at the corner of Paradise was raised up a story after Sandy. It was a grueling 2 year process.

Conversations turn to the worries facing so many people over the rising waters. There is the concern about rising flood insurance costs, their investment and if they leave, where to go? "Buy-outs" were not part of the recovery discussion in Piermont right after Hurricane Sandy. Residents suggested that "maybe we were just not ready to go there"

A couple of years ago, some Bogertown residents had a meeting led by the Consensus Building Institute as part of the work of the Piermont Resiliency Commission. "We were interested, as were some others, in looking into Federal programs available for the purchase of land such as ours," said homeowner Elisabeth Tapley. "But going after this kind of

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Bogertown Flooding at high tide during the Nor'easter of February 9, 2016, at about 11AM. Flood elevation is at 4.4ft NAVD88, or about 1.4ft above street level. Photo by Klaus Jacob

Piermont Reflections



Can you picture Piermont without any bicycles? I can because there were very few here when I was a kid. I would have been amazed to see a grownup on a bike back then.

My family moved from Westchester to an apartment in Grand View in 1947. I was 11 years-old. I had a balloon-tired bike that I would sometimes ride into Piermont. Occasionally, I'd even pedal all the way to Nyack, walking it up the long hill where the Salisbury apartments are now. I seldom saw anyone else on a bicycle.

A couple of years later, my best friend Charles Mouquin and I talked our parents into buying us three-speed Raleighs for Christmas. I've never owned a car that excited me as much as that English bike did. In my mind, the Raleigh brand had Rolls Royce like prestige and mystery. Our bikes came with hand brakes (rare then), headlights with built-in front wheel generators, Sturmey-Archer gears, Brooks leather seats (Raleigh called them saddles) and nifty black leather tool kits with actual metal tools.

Charles and I rode those bikes all over Rockland, down into Bergen County and once going as far north as Bear Mountain. We took them to Westchester on the passenger ferry that in those days ran between Nyack and Tarrytown. We seldom saw other kids on bikes and never adults.

In the early 1960s, I moved back here to Sparkill with my wife and son. I had talked so much about my old Raleigh that when my wife came across one at a garage sale, she bought it. She surprised me with it on Father's Day. I got her a three-speed bicycle and we'd ride together to Nyack and Hook Mountain. We loved biking along the river and marveled that other people weren't doing it. Our son had a banana seat Schwinn and no interest in being seen riding with us.

Eventually, we swapped our three-speed bikes for racier 10-speed Peugeots. Pumping up the Salisbury Hill became much easier. We would pedal out to the end of the pier and along the river, still rarely seeing another bike. I always thought cycling was the most enjoyable way to get some exercise.

Sometimes we'd follow Hook Mountain's riverside trail to Rockland Lake. We'd head for beers at the very funky Last Chance Saloon in downtown Congers. Occasionally, we'd bring our bikes into the city and pedal around Central Park. We twice went on the city's five borough bike tour with hundreds of other cyclists. There were still very few bikers here along the river.

In 1981, an illness permanently stopped my biking. About the same time, interest in the sport seemed to explode. A friend who had never cared about biking, suddenly talked about doing centuries. A century, it turns out, is pedaling 100 miles in a single day.

I'd always thought that one of the best things about biking is that you can do it alone, dressed anyway you want. Now, riders come through Piermont in organized groups, dressed in identical spandex outfits, riding bikes costing as much as a good used car. On warm weather weekends, they wake people with their loud conversations. Bikers and drivers fight. Side mirrors get broken. Police are called.

So much has changed. My favorite bike route along the river is now wildly popular. Once every year, hundreds come from all over the world to pedal it on the Gran Fondo bike tour. Even more of them will find us when they open the bicycle path on the new Tappan Zee Bridge (I won't use the other name).

My son has my old Peugeot and he takes good care of it. If I could, someone asked, would I start riding along the river again? I don't know. I don't know. — *Bob Samuels*

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Gerhardt's Automotive Repair in Piermont Closes After 80 Years

A fixture of downtown Piermont's eclectic architecture as well as a much-loved institution is closing its doors. David Gerhardt announced that he will be closing his automotive service station, ending over eight decades of his family's service to the local community.

Besso's Service Station, the predecessor to Gerhardt's, was opened on the site of what had been Linkey's Candy Store in approximately 1935 at the north end of "Downtown". Kurt Gerhardt, a recent immigrant from Germany, started working at the shop shortly thereafter, and assumed ownership in approximately 1938, renaming it Kurt's at that time. Kurt's brother Otto joined the forces at the shop in 1955, taking over completely in 1965 when Kurt retired. Otto's son David started pumping gas and helping the mechanics as an 8 year old child, and in turn assumed the management when Otto retired.



Gerhardt's Sign – a Piermont icon.

Regardless of the name, which changed several times over the decades, (it has officially been "Gerhardt's" since the 1980s) the shop has been run by the same family for over 80 years. Over the decades Gerhardt's earned a reputation for providing skillful repairs, performed on time, economically and with expertise. They catered to the cars of many local residents, whether domestic or foreign, new or vintage, and took particular pleasure in the repair of eccentric vehicles. Many residents, upon leaving Piermont, would still return to Gerhardt's for inspections and repairs, even if that required a special trip and considerable effort.

Gerhardt's loyal customers, many of whom have depended on the guys at the shop – David, Mike Kolling and Tony

DeLoatch for decades – feel lost. The Gerhardt's crew will likewise miss their many friends. And even as rumors about the future of the key Piermont property swirl, the community bids a fond farewell to Gerhardt's Automotive.

-- Article and Photos by Daniel Spitzer, MD



David Gerhardt (left) holds up a photo of his uncle Kurt at work, with Tony DeLoatch (middle) assisting, and mechanic Mike Kolling at right.



Besso's Service station, circa 1937. Handwriting on the back of the vintage print provides some early history.



Kurt (L) and Otto Gerhardt (R), circa 1950s. Note, at right, the ad for Coke, "Have a Coke in Bottles" and, behind it, the railroad box car labelled "Canadian Pacific". The Erie Railroad spur into Piermont was still active at that time.



As an 8 year old David proudly sports his "Shell" uniform next to his father Otto. This photo was taken at the same spot as the photo of the present day staff.

Gerhardt's Goes but the Building Stays, a Conversation with David Gerhardt

Gerhardt's Automotive Repair, a Piermont institution, shut its doors for good last month. It means that for the first time in more than 80 years, there's no handy place in the village to get a car serviced.

"I am worn out," says 59-year-old David, the last of the three Gerhardts, explaining why he closed the garage. "It's hard to get any free time. I don't have any kids (my wife and I weren't lucky in that respect) so there is no one to step in behind me."

He had hoped the space would remain a garage. He tried selling both the business and the property as a package. No one he could find was interested in the business. One potential buyer wanted to tear down the garage and replace it with retail space and apartments, but that deal didn't come through.

The successful buyer is David Kaliff, a Grand View resident. He plans to use it for offices and make minimal changes to the building. The wine store will remain along with Len Hunt's metal railing company in the rear. He'll even keep the name Gerhardt Strass on the alley next to the building. Kaliff is the President and CEO of Xyster. Its website says it "specializes in managing organizational and technological change for enterprises on a global basis."

Besso's Service Station, the predecessor to Gerhardt's, was opened on the site of what had been Linkey's Candy Store around 1935. David's uncle, Kurt Gerhardt, a recent German immigrant, started working there early on. Around 1938, he took over, renaming the place Kurt's. His brother Otto joined the business in 1955, after coming from Germany. He became the owner in 1965 when Kurt retired.

Otto's son is David. He remembers pumping gas and helping the mechanics when he was just eight. "In high school," he says, "I really didn't have any interest in cars except for driving mine. I went to RCC for a year, not knowing what I was looking to do. Then I found out they had an automotive program. Well, I had been doing hands-on stuff with cars for years and the light bulb went off. I learned the theory behind

the hands-on stuff."

He had taken some business courses. "I knew that end a little more than my dad," he says. At a certain point he realized he would take over the business. It has always been profitable but "the past couple of years it's kind of flatlined," he said. Part of the problem is that the garage's taxes have gone up faster than its income.

Another factor eating into profits is that today's cars need less service, David points out, ticking off some of the reasons why that's true: Synthetic oils don't have to be changed as often. Cars come with longer warranties so that people bring them back to the dealer for service. People lease cars that sometimes come with maintenance.

Cars have changed a lot over the years. "They've become more complicated "Nowadays it's nothing but computers," he says. He has been taking as many as three or four courses a year just to stay on top of things.

Customers are loyal to the Gerhardts. Even after they moved away, some come back for inspections and repairs, but not everyone loves them. "I've thrown people out of the shop," the mild sounding David says. "I've had to call the police to help me once or twice. I've mellowed out a lot. In my younger days I was a little more hot headed."

Many customers know David's wife Kathleen who worked part time as the garage's book keeper. David and his mechanics could often be seen having lunch together behind the garage's plate glass window.

"I have customers who knew me as a child," he says. "As I grew up and started taking over the business, they started families. I see their kids now getting married and having families. I have seen generations of families. That's what I'll miss the most."

He won't miss the pressures of heading a business. "I am going to take a little time off, then look for a job. "I want to work somewhere when there is a problem with a car I can turn around and tell the boss, "There's a problem..."

—Bob Samuels



Who is Sylvia Welch?

Suppose you had decided decades ago that you would like to spend your later years writing grant proposals that would fund projects for some of Rockland County's diverse towns and villages. What would you do to prepare yourself? Would a history PhD help? Well, it couldn't hurt.

But spending her mature years in fundraising was, of course, not what Sylvia Welch actually had in mind when she left the Chicago suburb where she had grown up for Providence and Brown University or when she went on to Ann Arbor for a masters degree at the University of Michigan. And in her two years as an adventurous young woman in London where she went to work on her doctorate supported by a fellowship from NYU, she surely did things that were more fun than studying, although Welch's thesis on Joseph Chamberlin (father of Neville) who invented the municipal bond and established Gas and Water Socialism in Birmingham did earn Welch her Doctorate.

Back in New York post PhD, she was hired by the New York City Economic Development Administration where she did research and helped write speeches for Mayor Lindsay; two years later the EDA made her director of the Lower East Side Redevelopment Area (she was 27) where she worked with congresspersons Ed Koch and Bella Abzug. She left that post in 1973 to help establish—and run—the Co-Workers Development Corporation, the first ex-offender training program for women in New York City, but ultimately as she says, “we let the men in.”

And several years into that job she was sitting with a friend at a coffee shop across from her office and he said he was looking for a partner for a contracting business doing sheet-rocking and plumbing. Why not? So Welch became his partner, and was living in Brooklyn, still sheet-rocking when she came to Piermont in 1984, looking for a house. She found one on Hudson Terrace, gave a \$100 check as a binder against money she didn't actually have in the bank, and became owner of a three story, two-family with a tenant. She didn't know she actually had a tenant until she heard a noise upstairs when she moved in. So she was living in Piermont when she quit sheet-rocking and helped start a homeless shelter—Harlem Teams for Self-Help—from which she retired in 2000.

When I suggested that Welch's regular, sometimes startling leaps in employment seemed to reflect a high level of self-confidence and an ability not to worry about money, she agreed. Early in her Piermont life she had even cooked in the Community Market. “I figured I could always find some way to make money,” she said. It turned out she was good at it, especially for others.

In the years since she moved here, Welch has written grant proposals for Piermont that have generated well over \$2 million for the village—her latest being a \$215,000 grant to complete the paving of Ferry Road. And she has also helped get underwriting for Nyack, Clarkstown, Orangetown, Airmont, Wesley Hills and Haverstraw.

Piermont is in some ways easy to write proposals for because “we're small enough to be comprehensible; proj-

ects can actually get done, and we've agreed to be looked at for the future.” Piermont's efforts to deal honestly with the realities of global warming have attracted widespread attention from as far away as the University of Florida, she says because most places really don't want to ask the hard questions.

Given the village's willingness to ask hard questions, Welch is currently working on finding grants that might help us fund projects that will allow us to keep this low-lying waterfront village viable in the face of sea level rise. And when she's not

attending meetings or sitting at her computer writing on our behalf, you can see Welch almost any morning—and sometimes in the afternoons as well—walking down, and then up, the steep hill to her house, staying strong. —Joan Gussow



Photo by Betsy Franco Feeney

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Sustainable Piermont

“Sustainability” sounds like a buzzword, but behind the jargon is an important mission: to demonstrably protect and preserve quality of life for generations to come.

In the spring of 2018, the Village of Piermont launched Sustainable Piermont, an initiative designed to raise awareness of simple things that residents can do now to become more environmentally responsible, as well as a longer-range vision for adapting to changes as sea levels rise.

“Sustainable Piermont came out of our attempt to become what is called a Climate Smart community”, according to Piermont’s Mayor, Bruce Tucker. “Climate Smart Community is a designation by the State saying that we as a Village have taken steps to reduce our carbon footprint, reduce our trash, to increase our recycling.”

Becoming a Climate Smart Community takes more than good intentions. Marcy Denker, a landscape designer and green infrastructure consultant, was hired in January of 2018 as Piermont’s Sustainability Coordinator, to help the Village navigate the State’s rigorous certification process. “You get points in your application if you are accomplishing things in the Climate Smart Communities program.”

One example: A reusable bag law passed in September will take effect in Piermont on January 1st 2019, effectively eliminating the distribution of single-use plastic bags and Styrofoam in the Village. Piermont also participates in a county-wide program to clarify recycling rules by providing informational decals at Village Hall, designed to go right on the blue and green recycling containers, making material sorting easier.

“The fact that you can’t get a single use plastic bag in Piermont – we’re a small Village, the overall environmental impact is miniscule”, Tucker says. “But one of the reasons we did pass it was in the hope that it gives influence to other Villages, towns, the County and ultimately State to pass. One of the things we are looking at right now is the possibility of weekly recycling instead of every other week. People have complained, and there are supposedly some statistics that say once bins get filled, people start throwing things in the trash.”

These small incremental steps could yield a big result. “If we get Certified by the State as a Climate Smart Community, it will give us access to grants that normally we would not have access to.” Tucker continues, “Those grants range from \$10,000 up to \$250,000 and can be used to fund electric car charging stations, solar panels for Village government buildings, a wide variety of things.”

“Pledging to be a Climate Smart Community is easy for a municipality to do, you just have to take the pledge saying that you’ll do all these things in a sort of theoretical way”, Denker says. But then to actually act on it, and get certified, is more of a hurdle. We are going to make our application in early January. We have the points amassed in order to be reviewed, and I’m hoping that we will have extra points so if there is any weakness elsewhere in the application, we’ll pass.”

The Mayor views Piermont’s sustainability in terms that go beyond trash separation and limiting plastic bags. “Something

that we’ve already done and are looking to expand (is) the closing of the Piermont Pier to motor vehicles,” Tucker says. “That Pier was never designed to handle the traffic on a Sunday in the summer. Parts of that pier are deteriorating, and besides the safety issues, besides the quality of life issues, the sustainability aspect of it is to make sure that that pier is there as long as possible.”

Proposing to close the Pier to motor vehicle traffic on 15 summer Sundays in 2018 unleashed a lot of competing opinion on social media and packed the Village Board of Trustees meetings. Despite the debate, a survey conducted after Labor Day found overwhelming support for limiting vehicle traffic on weekends, especially from Piermont residents.

Tucker says, “Bottom line, my first responsibility is to the residents of Piermont. And what I found, and now especially verified by this survey, is that more than the majority of Piermont residents not only prefer to have it closed on Sundays, but next year want more Sundays.”

Piermont’s small size and engaged population makes it an excellent laboratory in which to learn how to prepare a community for a rapidly changing world.

“I think Piermont has always kind of led the way when it comes to progressive thinking and policies” according to the Mayor. The thing I tell everybody I talk to is this: While everyone else is talking about climate change, Piermont is living it, and we take it 100 percent more seriously.”

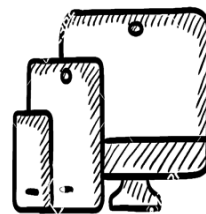
More details about Sustainable Piermont can be found at facebook.com/SustainablePiermont and on the Village of Piermont Website, www.piermont-ny.gov. – Julie Harman

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Join Piermont's Neighbor-to-Neighbor (N2N) Program; Help Out or Get Help in an Emergency

Village residents who suffered through Superstorm Sandy in 2012 know that we all have to prepare for the next big storm. Piermont's Waterfront Resiliency Commission, whose mission is to help the village prepare for flooding and sea level rise through education, outreach and planning, has taken a giant step forward in this endeavor by creating a Neighbor-to-Neighbor or N2N program to organize residents so that we can help each other out during times of emergency.

Piermont Village Trustee Nathan Mitchell spoke about the initiative at a special meeting at the Village Hall on Monday, October 22.

"N2N gives residents a way to help during times of emergency," said Mitchell. "While people generally help out during times of emergency, we wanted to formalize the process somewhat and give it a communications framework to make it more effective."

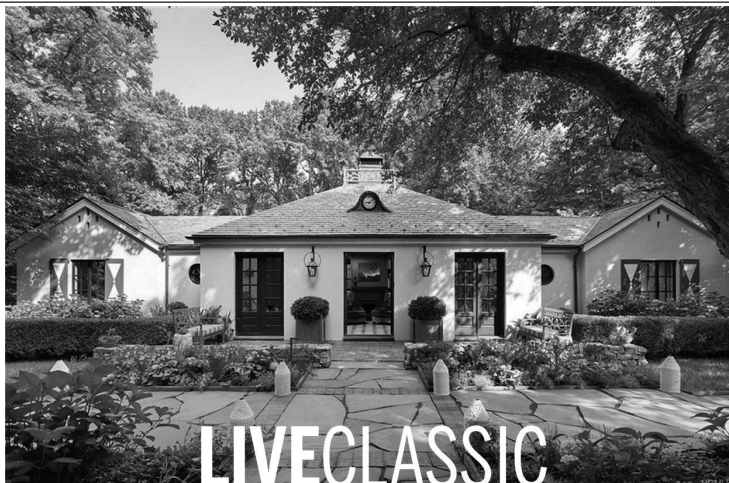
Residents can sign up for the program either to help out with emergencies or to be looked in on during times of emergency. Residents do not need any special training for this program.

"Residents who sign up for the program will receive notices when a major storm is approaching Piermont," said Mitchell. "On the night before the storm, we will send out a notice to all of those residents who had signed up for N2N. If we have a flooding event the next day that is creating a hazardous situation, we will send out a second notice to all those people who had volunteered to check in on their neighbors. We will send a list to them of all the people who have requested that someone check in on them."

The program is beneficial in a number of ways, noted Mitchell. It gives residents a sense of connection with the community. Plus there are village residents who are getting older who have special needs and could use a little help during an emergency.

There is a page on the village website, which is <http://piermont-ny.gov/piermont-resiliency-community-workshop-presentation.html> that offers more information on the program. There is also an email link if you wish to sign up to either help out during an emergency to be checked on.

continued on page 8



"The Clock House", Vibrant Chic Home in Snedens Landing, Short Walk to Hudson \$3,600,000

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It is: piermontN2N@piermont-ny.gov. When you write an email, include your name and address, your cell phone, your home phone and your email address. Indicate if you would like to be a Neighborhood Team Leader. If you wish to be checked on, include any special needs that you have.

This program fits in well with Piermont's police and fire department efforts, according to Mitchell. "What we want to do is work with neighborhood team leaders," he said. "When there is a problem or emergency, the fire department or EMS will be called to respond to it."

For those residents who wish to be more involved in times of emergency, Mitchell urged them to join the fire department. He himself has been a member of the fire department for a decade and finds it extremely rewarding.— *Ron Derven*

Village Has Sandbags for Emergencies

In case of a flooding event in Piermont, the DPW has a limited number of sandbags available should a major storm strike, according to Tom Temple, Supervisor, Department of Public Works. "We have a few hundred filled sandbags that were prepared by the DPW in stock. In the event of a major storm, we will fill more. We generally give out around 10 sandbags to each resident, depending on where in the Village they live. After a storm most people want us to collect the bags, but they free to keep them if they wish.



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Create a 'Go Bag' for Emergencies

In some emergencies, you may have to leave your home and Piermont. In that case, the Waterfront Resiliency Commission recommends that you have what is called a "Go Bag," a readily available bag of supplies to take with you in times of emergency.

Nathan Mitchell, a member of the Piermont Waterfront Resiliency Commission, noted that a "Go Bag" is a highly personal thing and that residents should pack what they think they need, such as a few days' supply of extra medication, if you take medication.

The Commission demonstrated a Go Bag at its October meeting, but here are suggestions for a Go Bag from the Piermont website.

Change of Clothing

- Extra dry socks

First Aid & Medications

- A week's supply of prescription medication
- Non-prescription medication
- First-aid kit
- Hand sanitizer and hand wipes

Food & Provisions

- Soap & toiletries
- Sleeping bag & bedding
- Bottled water and dehydrated & canned foods
- Extra pair of glasses and /or contact lenses

Emergency Communications

- Battery-powered radio with fresh batteries
- Cell phone & charger, battery charger
- Whistle to signal for help
- Flashlight with extra fresh batteries

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From The Library

In the early 2000s, during construction of the Dennis P. McHughPiermont Public Library's Flywheel Park building, locally owned and operated Piermont Web Design volunteered its services to create an online library "location" as well. The first piermontlibrary.org opened the virtual doors to web-based library services for the Piermont community. For over a decade, PWD's site design, development, and maintenance made it possible for residents to access the library catalog, online learning, event information, and much more from their home computers and mobile devices. The library staff and trustees extend sincere thanks to Piermont Web Design for artfully creating and faithfully maintaining the first piermontlibrary.org. Their efforts brought the library's services and communications into the 21st century. With the new version of the website, library administrators aim to build on that foundation.

As readers may have noticed, the library's new website

remained under construction a bit longer than anticipated. The design committee took care to make the new site as user-friendly and useful as possible before launch. Without further ado, the library presents an all-new piermontlibrary.org funded by a grant from an anonymous Piermont family, and built by Rockland Web Design. Now – yes, now!— you can use your Piermont library card to stream movies; use an online calendar to register for programs; find the most current library newsletter on the homepage; use online forms to apply for a library card or request tech help; and more. *Check it out again for the first time.*

Join us on **Sunday, Dec. 16** at 2 pm when **Soprano Anna Veleva presents her Rockland Holiday Concert**. Mrs. Veleva has received international acclaim as one of today's most gifted and versatile opera stars. She has performed at major venues such as Carnegie Hall - Stern Auditorium, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, Sofia National Opera House, and the Plovdiv Opera in Bulgaria. The program includes Puccini favorites: "O mio Babbino Caro" from Gianni Schicchi, "Signore Ascolta" from Turandot, "Musetta's Waltz" from La Boheme, and much more.

On **Sunday, February 10** at 2 pm, **Daniel Spitzer presents: To the North Pole!!! (#*)# = Geomagnetic* = Almost... A Photo and Video Adventure to Greenland and the High Arctic**

Upcoming Events for Children: In addition to the usual schedule of stories, crafts, and music, Miss Nancy has planned two special holiday break events for Thursday, Dec. 27. Do-It-Yourself Crafts will be held 2 – 4 pm. Later that evening, Movie & Dessert featuring Babe [G] begins at 8:15 pm. Please call 845-359-4595 to register for these events.

On **Friday, December 28**, 3 – 4 pm Alexis Starke presents a Kids Architecture Class for Grades 1 – 5. Learn about the colorful, imaginative, and eco-minded architecture of Austrian architect Hundertwasser and create a project inspired by his work. Space is limited. Call 845-359-4595 to register.

The events listed above are free and open to the public. Please join us. www.piermontlibrary.org!

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Front Line Report

With winter fast approaching, the Piermont Department of Public Works (DPW) is reminding all residents to throw no snow in the roads when clearing their driveways. "Snow thrown back into the street after the DPW has cleared the road could refreeze and cause potential accidents for both motorists and pedestrians," warned Tom Temple, Superintendent of the DPW. "Further, if residents have a fire hydrant on their property they can assist the Fire Department by clearing any snow from around the front and sides of the hydrant."

Pick-up of Christmas trees: Temple said that after the holidays, the DPW will collect Christmas trees on Wednesday January 2nd and on Wednesday January 16th as part of the Village's tree recycling program. He reminds residents to remove all lighting and decorations from the trees before placing them at curb-side for collection.

The Piermont Fire Department has started its recruitment drive and is looking for new volunteer members for both the Fire Department and for the Ambulance Corps, according to Don Hardy, Chief, Piermont Fire Department. "Stop by at the Fire Department any Monday

night to pick up an application and to speak with us volunteering," said the Chief.

For those who wish to join the Ambulance Corps, they will be trained as an EMT at no cost to them, according to the Chief. The training is rigorous, requiring 200 hours of classes. The Chief said that to join the Fire Department or the Ambulance Corps, regular volunteers must be 18 years of age and be a U.S. citizen or have a Green Card, although 16-year-olds can join the Fire Department as junior members.

"We would expect that anyone who is trained as an EMT will volunteer for at least a year and also agree to at least 12 hours a week riding the ambulance," said Chief Hardy. "That 12 hours of time can be split up throughout a typical week."

The Piermont Fire Department's annual Christmas Tree sale is underway at The Eleanor Stroud Park at the Sparkill Skating Pond. The sale of Christmas Trees is an important fund-raiser for The Piermont Fire Department, so buy your Christmas tree at the park this year to help our dedicated volunteer fire department.

— Ron Derven

Want to Reach a Village Official?

Bruce Tucker—Mayor,
845-359-1258 ext. 304;
Email: btucker@piermont-ny.gov

Mark Blomquist--Deputy Mayor;
Email: mblomquist@piermont-ny.gov

Ivanya Alpert—Trustee;
Email: ialpert@piermont-ny.gov

Rob Burns—Trustee;
Email: rburns@piermont-ny.gov

Nathan Mitchell—Trustee;
Email: NMitchell@piermont-ny.gov

Jennifer Deyorgi--Village Clerk,
845-359-1258 ext. 303;
Email: clerk@piermont-ny.gov

John Gallucci--Village Justice,
845-359-1258, ext. 330;
Email: jgallucci@piermont-ny.gov

Michael O'Shea-- Chief of Police,
Phone: 845-359-1258 ext. 305

Tom Temple--DPW Supervisor,
Phone: 845-359-1717

Charlie Schaub--Building Inspector,
845-359-1258 ext. 311

Paradise in Piermont, continued from page 1

funding is too big a job for any one household. We would need the Village government behind us. Eighty percent of the time we are so fortunate to be here – it is so difficult to think of being anywhere else."

The closest example of a government purchase of a neighborhood is the Squires Gate development in Suffern, NY. Built in the 1970's, in a floodplain along the Mahwah River, it experiences constant flooding. In 2016, New York's Governor's Office of Storm Recovery's program, New York Rising, bought out large parts of the neighborhood. The N.Y. Rising program closed at the end of 2017. Still, there is Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) money available when an area is declared a Federal Disaster Area. "...buyouts are often undertaken only when an entire flood-prone neighborhood is interested, the cleared land becomes a buffer against the ravages of future storms, providing protection against flooding for those who live nearby."¹

What would be helpful going forward? The Village is well

into discussing these issues with the Piermont Resiliency Commission established several years ago, and the new Neighbor to Neighbor program (See Page 6) to assist during storms and other emergencies. Some residents have a vision of a raised boardwalk to traverse the ponded streets.

Sea-level rise driven by climate change in Piermont and elsewhere is happening. It has been working its way here over the course of years, across the marsh, across people's yards. Residents on Paradise are taking this in and considering their future. Robyn Watts, whose boys can be seen canoeing the marsh from their backyard in the summertime, reflects, "When we first bought the property, I imagined the boys having a romantic childhood here like Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer rafting on the Mississippi. Bogertown has not disappointed. It's the most magical place to grow up." -- Margaret Grace

¹Elizabeth Rush, "This is not the way to stop homes from flooding". New York Times, August 15, 2018.



Piermont's Holiday Donation Locations

Piermont Village Hall: The Piermont PAL is having a toy and food drive this holiday season. They are collecting NEW kids toys at Piermont Village Hall (no used toys please), which can be dropped off during business hours of 9am-5pm. They are also collecting canned and boxed dry food items. Donations will be accepted until Dec. 18th. If you have questions, please call Village Hall at 845-359- 1258 ext. 301.

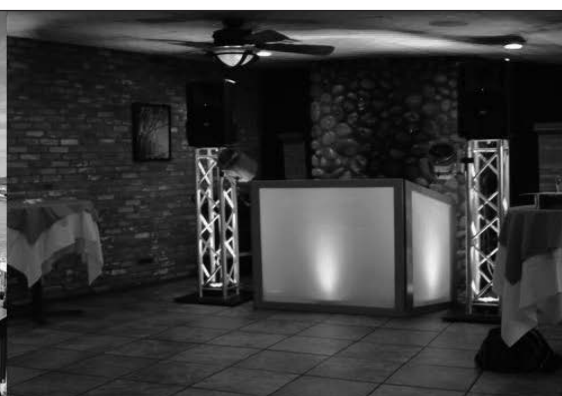
M&T Bank: Part of the Piermont PAL Toy drive -take a tag off the tree to purchase gifts for children ages 1 to 17. Place wrapped gifts under the tree by December 18th.

Dennis P. McHugh Piermont Library: Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee's office dropped off a toy drive donation box for new toys going to St. John the Baptist Church Toy Drive through December 18th.

Piermont Reformed Church: Drop off food donations for People to People throughout the year. We are happy to include community donations of nutritious, non-perishable foods as well as diapers and other essentials and deliver them to P2P in Nanuet. Piermont Reform Church continues to support Helping Hands through donations of clothing to its Outreach Center and of food to the Rockland Interfaith Breakfast Program. Please call 845-359-4637 to arrange a time for your donations to be dropped off, or if you wish, we will come pick them up.

After Christmas:

St John the Baptist Church: The Giving Tree: Take an angel ornament off the Christmas Tree in the back of the church. Purchase clothing (no toys) for a specific child listed on the ornament and place wrapped gifts under tree by the Sunday after Christmas, Dec 30th.



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Piermont Friends and Neighbors...



Holiday Boutique at the Piermont Train Station - all aboard the Piermont Express!



Piermont Historical Society's Holiday Pop-Up Boutique at the TWK Community Market



Santa arrives by fire engine!



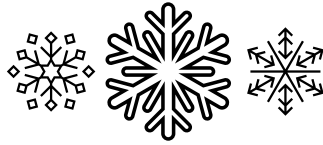
Santa Claus with children in the Piermont Firehouse



Santa listens to requests



Children waiting their turn



Centerfold photos by
Betsy Franco Feeney

...Celebrate the Holidays



Some of the artists and photographers included in the Gift of Art show at the Piermont Library



Tom Chapin, the Chapin sisters, and Mary and Michael Marks performing at the Holiday Tree Lighting



Three elves with Santa



Piermont residents with Santa in front of the tree during the Piermont Holiday Festival Tree Lighting



Happy Hanukkah! Families arrive for Piermont's Menorah Lighting



Celebrating lighting Piermont's Menorah with Mayor Bruce Tucker and Rabbi Tzili Ehrenreich



Photograph by BF Feeney

Piermont's Historic Drawbridge

A photo, tribute, and a song

On October 5th, Piermont's 1880 drawbridge over the Sparkill Creek was illuminated for the first time. Piermont singer and songwriter Tom Chapin added lines to his Piermont song "Hometown" to celebrate the occasion, and Piermonters and dignitaries danced to celebrate. Joining them was Dan Sherman, Piermont's Parks Commissioner who worked tirelessly to coordinate this project, made possible by Rockland Art in Public Places, Green Mountain "Sun-Club", and other civic donors. Enjoy this beauty most evenings from dusk until 10:30pm. Thank you, Dan and team. Thank you, Tom.

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Hometown

by John Forster & Tom Chapin

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In my neck of the woods there's a little speck of a place.
It sits where the river is miles wide at the foot of a
beautiful mountainside.

And this speck of a place is a heck of a speck of a place;
The friendliest kids, the friskiest pets, the prettiest stores
and luncheonettes
And this heck of a speck of a place is my hometown.

*Hometown. Deedle deidle dum. Everybody needs a place to
come from.*

*Hometown. Deedle deidle down. Sing a song of my
hometown.*

Now, my neck of the woods is an old historical place.
The French and Indians got in a fight and General
Washington spent the night

In my speck of a town. It's kind of a hand-me-down
And all its former residents from scalawags to presidents
Still seem to be walking around in my hometown.

*Hometown. Deedle deidle dum. Everybody needs a place to
come from.*

Hometown. Deedle deidle down. Sing a song of my hometown.

Sing a song of nosy neighbors, nosy but they're on your side.
Sing a song of ball games, book fairs, yard sales,
Sing a song of hometown pride.

Now I know that my home may not be Paris or Rome,
To me it carries the special glow of people and places I
really know

And your personal town may also be low on renown.
But you love it just because it's yours and end up giving
guided tours
And handing out color brochures of your hometown.

*Hometown. Deedle deidle dum. Everybody needs a place to
come from.*

Hometown. Deedle deidle down. Sing a song of my hometown.

In my neck of the woods there's an old historical
bridge... built when Wooden boats played hide-and-seek
in and out of Sparkill Creek

A century of up and down on the road to Piermont Town
Now they fixed it up and brought it back, and we cele-
brate this artifact

The only one, anywhere, still intact is here in our hometown

*Hometown. Deedle deidle dum. Everybody needs a place to
come from.*

Hometown. Deedle deidle down. Sing a song of my hometown.


~~~~~



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