

The Piermont Newsletter

VOLUME XXXVII NO.2

PUBLISHED BY THE PIERMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION

FALL 2007

Re-thinking Village Hall

In the last issue of the Newsletter, we reported that the Village Board had selected a renovation plan for Village Hall

The Board had asked its engineering consultants to come up with a ballpark estimate which would bring the police facilities up to code and upgrade Village administrative offices. A cost of 1.25 - 1.5 million dollars was estimated. As the Board has continued to think about the proposal, their thinking has changed.

In July, it was revealed that the Board will be looking at other options before it moves ahead with a plan drawn up by architect Robert Silarski. This change of heart came as a welcome surprise to residents who were convinced that not enough options were being examined.

Two concerns are fueling the reconsideration. The estimate for the renovation didn't include the significant expense and disruption of relocating the administrative staff, court, and police to temporary facilities during the year or so of construction. In addition, the costly renovation, while it would bring the police station into NY State code compliance, would cut down the size of the upstairs meeting room by 40%, adding little additional space for the clerk's office and court needs.

Mayor Ed Traynor told the *Newsletter* that he is interested in re-opening the discussion of using the Piermont-owned Plastifold property (named for a former occupant) on Ohio Street, just west of Piermont Landing's Parking Lot D. Flooding and site pollution from earlier industrial uses have steered the village away from using this site for anything other than sand and salt storage. "Its designation as a brownfields {polluted} site by New York State could actually offer the village an advantage," said Traynor. "There is state grant money available for remediation and construction on these areas when projects are deemed

for the public good. If a portion of the costs could be covered, it would make sense." There is also talk of acquiring the large "island" of grass on the north side of Gair Street as you enter Piermont Landing from Main Street. It is currently owned by Phil Griffin. If a separate police station were built, the administrative and court offices could move into the Village Hall space once used by the police department, although some upgrading of the Village Hall would still be needed.

Trustee Devan has suggested the possibility of selling the current Village Hall to help fund a completely new, all-inclusive municipal building. If the Village Hall were sold at an estimated \$950K, the size of the bond for a new building could be significantly less than the one needed for a renovation. And some of that debt service could be paid by the tax revenue generated by a privately-owned Village

Hall building. Devan thinks this could be a financially smart option for the village. Concerns over the loss of the historic Village Hall building, a community focal point since its construction in 1938, could possibly be addressed by a condition in the contract of sale that the building not be demolished, and that the façade remain intact.

The entire Board is determined to keep the momentum of this project going. There is particular urgency to address police station conditions which do not meet state minimum standards. Additionally, the Village Hall roof is in need of replacement, and that job is being held at bay until the building's future is decided. "We must act now," says Trustee Joan Gusow. Trustee Chris Sanders agrees: "At this point it's about cost and time. I am waiting to see the tail of the tape."

~Margaret Grace



Islands in the stream. See story on page 3.

Ed Traynor Leaving Office With No Regrets



Ed Traynor

When Piermont first elected Ed Traynor mayor six years ago there was little cooperation between village departments. "That was one of the things I saw as a major problem with the government," recalled Traynor, who will be stepping down from his post in December.

"We suffered in 1999 when Tropical Storm Floyd slammed Piermont because there was no communication between departments," added Traynor, who was on the Village Board then. "They knew it. They said it. They weren't working as a team. When I

was elected, the team concept was what we focused on.

"The communication and cooperation between heads of departments is just phenomenal now," he remarked with satisfaction, ranking it as one of his major accomplishments. "They work like one unit. They support each other. If you had gone to a board meeting 10 years ago you would not have seen the police chief, the fire chief and head of the Highway Department sitting together like they do now."

Over the years, the village has seen many changes in its professional leaders. Traynor appointed most of them. "In general, across-the-board, the village employees are more professional," he says. Few would disagree with that assessment. They include the village attorney, village clerk, highway department head, building inspector, police chief and judge.

The toughest decision Piermont's 54-year-old Mayor made was to reassess the village. This came after lawsuits from various condominium boards pointed out the inequities in the tax rolls. Traynor's village friends, advisers, as well as politicians across Rockland County, urged him to just reassess the condominiums and leave the single-family houses alone. They told him to do otherwise was political suicide.

"They said I was crazy to do it," he recounts. "They told me it is too big a task, you'll make too many enemies and you'll have too many problems. I felt strongly that it really was the fair thing to do," he said. "I knew it would affect some people, including friends, in a negative way. That was tough. I am happy to say my friends are still my friends.

"The overall feedback I have gotten about the reassessment has been very, very positive," he went on. "Even people who have had an increase in taxes have told me, 'you know it was the right thing to do, the fair thing to do.'" There's little doubt that Traynor would easily be reelected if he choose to run again.

He hasn't always been in step with the people. He ended up dropping three major initiatives in the face of heavy opposition. The first was a proposal to move the train station downtown and use it as a visitors' center. He also was a backer of a scheme to establish historic districts in Piermont. More recently, he had supported a plan to gut and rebuild the Village Hall.

"Being mayor is a real learning experience," he says philosophically. "When those things were going on, I had to keep reminding myself that I am there to represent the residents. Often I thought I knew what was best,

continued on page 17

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Creek Silt Not Moving Tomorrow



Water over the dam. High water in early summer. Photo by Sally Savage

Don't expect them to be digging up silt from the Sparkill Creek anytime soon. Scientists at the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) are analyzing a 15-page report on the pollutants found in six samples taken in July from the millpond section of the waterway. The type and level of pollution will determine the cost of its disposal.

"Nothing jumps out—nothing

seems horrible in the report," reported Ed Devine, who heads the Rockland County Drainage Agency. It ordered the sampling in response to Connie Coker, who has been concerned about the silting that in recent years has created large islands in the waterway. Coker, Piermont's representative in the Rockland County Legislature, held a Village Hall meeting with Devine and other officials this spring about attacking the problem.

"It could take the DEC a couple of months to tell us what they recommend we do with the silt once it is removed," said Devine, describing a tedious process filled with bureaucratic hurdles that have to be jumped before anything happens. After Devine's Drainage Agency reviews the state report, it will send it for more reviews to the Corps of Army Engineers and another section of the state DEC.

Once those two reports come back, the Drainage Agency makes its recommendations to the county executive and the County Legislature. Politics are certain to come into play at that stage.

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The Newsletter is published three times a year by the Piermont Civic Association, Box 454, Piermont, NY 10968

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STREET WALKING

Another Landmark Gone

Rick's Piermont Pictures, the video store that so long served the TV crowd with every sort of tape and DVD imaginable, has decided to close its doors. A reason given by a staffer



was the ascendancy of Netflix and other online sources that dominate the field today.

For years, the store on River Road was a mecca not only for nearby residents but for film buffs throughout the region, because no matter what they were seeking, whether classic or just released, they would probably find it at Rick's. Also to be missed is the sign outside with echoes of Casablanca and, which depicted a craggy alp with the store name, Piermont Pictures, floating like the big Hollywood production company with a remarkably similar name.

Meanwhile, proprietor Ric Pantale has gone on to newer and bigger challenges. His movie "Delilah Rose" has completed principal photography and is in the editing stage. "We are very excited about the movie, because we honestly feel we have somethin

good," Ric says.

During the production he used many local youths as part of the crew, where they learned filmmaking and its process. You can see the website, delilahrosefilm.net, and catch up with some of their doings while making the picture.

"We hope to enter Sundance(winter) and Tribeca (spring) film festivals with the hope that it gets picked up for distribution," Ric says. "All in all, it was a fun shoot, and I am now working on a Lewis&Clark screenplay for HBO."

Fruit of the Vine

Piermont Fine Wine & Spirits is now the property of Jung Kim, who saw the previous owner off to a new job in Martha's Vineyard. Kim is a wine enthusiast who has introduced new brands in every price range since he bought the store in November. His goal is to please all tastes and pocketbooks, including special ordering and stocking of your personal preferences. His prices are competitive with the larger commercial establishments. He stays open 7 days a week. Kim, who lives across the street from the store, keeps a photo of the original owners, George and Emma Walters, on the wall for the benefit of sentimental old-timers.

Inside the Outside

Some things just grow naturally and organically. That seems to be the case with flowers, but it also seems to be the case with a new shop that opened on Ferdon Avenue in the former E&F Flower Shop.

Joe Serra and Bill Walsh, who own the house next door, bought the building soon after the flower shop owners retired. And then they wondered what to do with the building. Instead of renting it out, they fitted it out with salvaged barn siding and faux textured painting and opened it as a shop and art gallery called "The Outside in Piermont."


It has an easy-going, attractive aspect. It has been open on weekends since the end of June. In good part it's a hobby, but a very generous one. Bill works as a nurse in community health services and Joe is director of information technology at Verizon Wireless. Their jobs support the shop and gallery.

"Our original thought was to reach out and just see what developed. People started coming to us. It's all happened. . .well, organically. We're just along for the ride," Bill said. The partners grow culinary and medicinal herbs in the building's greenhouse and they sell a range of organic garden materials and some sturdy hand-forged garden tools. In a conservationist spirit, they offer a 'friendly' mouse trap that frees the evict, and a tiny vacuum cleaner to evict spiders.

A gallery provides a showcase for local artists. "We like artwork and pottery that is recycled, salvaged, unique, hand-made and hand thrown." There are birdhouses made from driftwood washed up on Piermont Pier. There are water colors by Robert Adzima, ceramic houses by Marlena Sanders, photographs by Phyllis Segura and Tom Artin and pot-

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tery by Jane Herold. There are cloth collages by Pat Gallway and painted driftwood sculptures. "Ninety-eight percent of the work is from artists in this area," Joe said. "We want to showcase the local community and represent visually what it is to be in Piermont."

Their genuine interest in the community goes a generous step further. Working with the Creative Arts Department of Camp Venture on Route 340, Joe and Bill have provided space in the building for horticultural therapy classes and a ceramics program. Pottery made by students will be sold in the shop with all proceeds going to Camp Venture. Stop by for some hot coffee. And try some delicious pastry and jams and jellies made by Dawn Howell of Piermont. You'll enjoy the very interesting artwork. The Outside in Piermont is open Thursday through Sunday from 11 to 6. The phone number is (845)398-0706.



Bill Walsh and Joe Serra. Photo by Fred Burrell

Fish Kill on Sparkill

Standing at ease on his porch in early June, the reeds in the Marsh swaying into a mirage within the Creek, Bill Herguth heard a raucous, alien sound. It was a noise somehow like a gasoline powered generator. Around a curve in the Creek, an open boat appeared with two men standing in the bow. Each had a scoop net. As they got closer, Bill saw that they were scooping up fish—not very lively fish.

In the back of the boat, Bill saw a generator and concluded that the men were catching fish by electrocuting them. He called the cops.

By the time the police arrived, the two fish scoopers, a third man, their 18-foot open boat and the generator were pulled up to the shore across from Kane Park as kids watched. They told the police that they belonged to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and were doing their job. Bill noticed a small DEC sticker on the side of the boat. There was also a sign saying "High voltage. Stay clear."

Bill can drop a fishing line into the water from his porch. He knows a great deal about the River and the Marsh. His business, Paradise Boats, rents out kayaks and canoes, and Bill takes city-folk on tours. He cares a lot about the Marsh and its birds and animals and fish. He quite rightly considers himself "Keeper of the Marsh."

Bill was appalled that the DEC itself was electrocuting fish. He talked to Kathy Hatttalah, fishery biologist in the Bureau of Marine Resources in the

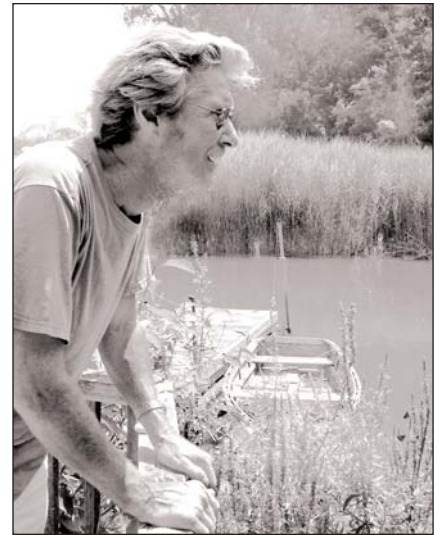


Photo by Fred Burrell

DEC. She said the DEC was indeed "electro-fishing." She said it is a standard annual procedure and they've been doing it in the Hudson for years. The purpose is to sample various species of fish in different parts of the River to see how much mercury or PCB's they contain.

Ms. Hattalah said that they use electric generators to stun the fish, so they will float to the surface. After they are scooped up, the different species from various locations are sent to a laboratory where they are mashed up in a blender, then tested for mercury and PCB content.

As to how much "collateral damage" there was—incidental fish stunned or electrocuted, Ms. Hattalah said she couldn't say. But Bill has plenty to say: "They shouldn't be electrocuting fish where kids can see them from Kane Park. They can sample fish other places, but not in my Creek."

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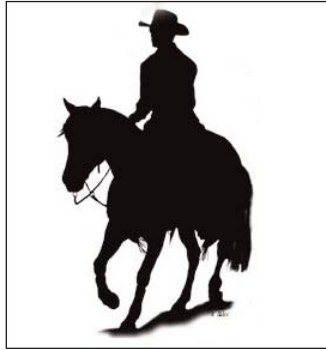
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Progress On The Cowboy Fields

In a letter to Our Town a few weeks ago, self-defined "old timer" Piermonter George Lynch wrote about his memories of growing up with the Cowboy Fields. His grandfather was given a cottage at the end of Piermont Place by the Whiton family, who owned the property at that time, in exchange for his watching over what were then called the Whiton fields and pond. His grandparents raised 8 children there, with no running water, indoor plumbing or electricity. And the children of his generation spent many happy hours playing in the fields. He expressed his hope that the land would not be sold to developers and that "its pond and stream could someday be returned to its original serene beauty overlooking Piermont and the Hudson Valley."

A great deal of progress has been made towards that end in the last several months, as support has been building for the acquisition of the land

by Rockland County. In early July, a group of elected officials and conservation professionals took a walk to see what exactly was being discussed so eloquently by so many at public meet-



ings and in print. County Legislator Connie Coker, Rockland County Coordinator, Division of Environmental Resources Allan Beers, Orangetown Supervisor Thom Kleiner, Jayne McLaughlin of the NYS Office of

Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Piermont Village Trustee Chris Sanders, and Seth McKee of Scenic Hudson were guided on a tour of the property by Nata Traub, a resident and strong supporter of the conservation efforts. Everyone was impressed with the beauty and significance of this piece of land, described by one as a "key" property.

Subsequently, the Environmental Committee of the Rockland County Legislature, led by Ms. Coker, passed a resolution to approve an application for a \$500,000 grant from the state to help in the acquisition of the property, and the following week the application was also given the go-ahead by the Budget and Finance Committee. The hope is that the county can find partners, such as the state and Scenic Hudson, to help raise enough money to buy the Cowboy Fields from the South Orangetown Central School District, which

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has been discussing the sale of so-called "surplus" lands in an effort to raise funds to augment its budget. The sale of the Cowboy Fields for the purpose of permanent preservation as green space, habitat corridor and watershed is viewed by many as the quintessential "win-win" situation, in which the School District receives much needed funds while the Rockland community retains this valuable piece of land.

To further the effort, a meeting was held in late July with Dr. Zambito, South Orangetown Superintendent of Schools, and Senator Thomas Morahan, County Executive Scott Vanderhoef, Connie Coker, Allan Beers and a representative of Scenic Hudson. The school district's appraiser was also present, and Supervisor Thom Kleiner was there on speaker phone. All of the elected officials were very supportive of the effort to preserve this land, making the point that the appraisal figure of \$8-10 million, based on the potential value of the land to a developer, would have to be adjusted, taking into consideration the immeasurable long term value of

preservation to the community.

In his letter, George Lynch related that Whiton Pond had been "our skating rink in the winter and our summer fishing and frog hunting spot and our nature preserve. In fact," he said, "our teachers in the first and second grades would walk us up the hill from our Hudson Terrace school to the pond and stream on field trips." There is no reason why the children of the school district should not continue to enjoy the benefit of having such a nature preserve and field laboratory for their use. In fact, it should be considered vital in these days of diminished natural resources and "nature-deficient" childhood experiences. The county would maintain the fields for passive recreational use, and the school would be able to use the area for nature study once again.

In his letter, George Lynch also reported that since the children of his era had played at being cowboys in the fields, they had chosen the name "Cowboy Fields." Another, more fanciful, source of the name is suggested in reading about the Revolutionary

War era "Cowboys" that roamed the Hudson Valley. They were Loyalists, or just plain thugs, who raided farms, stole livestock and produce, and traded with the British for a living. One famous Cowboy, Claudius Smith, was the scourge of "Orange County", which at that time included what is now Rockland. Since Piermont, then called the Slote or Tappan Slote, was a major trading post and transportation hub, there is some reason to believe that it might have been a target for the Cowboys, who would have camped out in the Cowboy Fields waiting for the latest shipment of goods to come up the creek. A memory of that name could have carried into the twentieth century.

Of course, we'll probably never know the whole story of the origin of the name, but perhaps through this building community effort the property can remain for all time as a home to wildlife, and to the dreams and play of children.

~Grace Mitchell

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40 Years Of The Newsletter

One of the best sources for the recent history of Piermont is the library's collection of the *Piermont Newsletter*, beginning with an issue from July 10, 1967, and running up to the present. There are a few gaps in the collection, and some readers received a plea earlier in the year from Bob Samuels asking residents to check their own archives for missing copies. So far we have had contributions from three "private collections," but are still looking. The library and the PCA are planning to join forces to have the issues bound for future generations of use, with the able assistance of Carolyn Kent, a former president of the PCA, who is now volunteering to help with local history at the library. She has done a thorough inventory of our boxes and binders of *Newsletters* to come up with the current list.

An article in that 1967 issue entitled "Happy Birthday to We" talks about the founding of the organization the year before. "Just about a year ago," it says, "a small group met informally to share their common bond—a deep affection for Piermont's uniqueness and desire to help it grow along the right lines. The result: the Piermont Civic Association..." The lead article discusses the controversy over a proposal for a new bank building on Main Street, designed in ultra-modern fashion and clad in some sort of blue reflective material. The village was up in arms against this design, insisting that a new building should be "in keeping

with the architecture of Piermont." The issue also includes a discussion of rezoning the Thompson property on 9W across from the then "new school," as well as that of the proposal to build more apartments in the style of the already existing Lawrence Park units. In his President's column, Bob Bradbury voices a concern about the "character of the village."

In the second issue from our collection, published in 1968, we read about a Mayor's committee being formed to help improve the business district and learn that a group of Piermonters, led by Lisa Ordahl, was chronicling Piermont houses as part of the national Historic American Home Survey. There is a report that the library, then being revitalized by a volunteer group, was expanding its hours, program and exhibits. A local history column called "The Day the Erie Came to Piermont," related the story of the birth of Piermont as a railroad boomtown and the President's column considered a proposal by Columbia University to build up to 2000 attached house on Clausland Mountain.

Reading through the back issues, one notices definite threads... Perhaps the longest thread deals with as land use issues, followed closely by that of civic involvement and pride of place. Historic importance and environment significance are woven in as we read about the Piermont Pier and marsh, for example. How many of today's readers know why the Pier exists or

that it didn't always belong to the Village or that the Piermont Marsh—now protected as part of the National Estuarine Research Reserve as a very significant environmental resource was once threatened with schemes for development of railroad lines and housing subdivisions?

What emerges as these threads are interwoven is a picture of an ongoing struggle of sorts—a struggle to maintain a small and vital community in a rich and unique environment. The political disputes, the issues of taxes and services and the stories of the various community groups organized for battle or for public service, add to this picture. Residents old and new have become involved in the struggle, recognizing the uniqueness of Piermont, its incredible natural environment, valuable architecture, interesting people and institutions. In reading these articles one comes to a very clear understanding that Piermont does not remain unique by accident or good fortune. An ongoing democratic process has been at work here, chronicled for four decades by the *Piermont Newsletter*.

Please contact Grace Mitchell at the library, 359-4595, x 102, if you have back issues (particularly early issues) of the *Newsletter* that you'd like to contribute. We are also interested in photographs and other memorabilia of local history interest. Newsletters and photographs can be photocopied and returned to you if you wish.

~Grace Mitchell

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Now You Know— It's A Restaurant

An impressive new building on Route 340 in Sparkill will open as an Italian restaurant this fall. The structure has been going up in fits and starts for three and a half years, intriguing motorists as they round the curve by the old oak tree.

Salvatore Coppola, owner of the building, said it would open as Coppola's Tuscan Grille "hopefully by Thanksgiving." It will seat 175 people on two floors connected by stairs and an elevator—a novelty in Sparkill. The cuisine will be Italian and the kitchen will feature a wood-burning oven.

Mr. Coppola's original concept was to renovate the white frame building that used to be Tony's Lobster House. But during the renovation, the kitchen

collapsed into the basement. An engineer declared the top two floors too fragile to support a roof, so they were torn down to basement level. Then further examination showed that the foundations were crumbling and couldn't support a new structure. So the old frame building had to be totally demolished and the new one constructed from scratch.

Construction delays and permit revisions slowed construction of the new structure. It isn't likely to collapse. Framed by steel I-beams, faced with stone and brick, covered with a metal roof, it is completely up to code.

Mr. Coppola, who lives in Fort Lee, owns two restaurants in New York City—Coppola's East and Coppola's



West. He's been in business there for 18 years and regards himself as a chef—a trade he learned in Naples. Although he won't be cooking the pasta in Sparkill, "someone from Italy will."

Asked if he was related to the film director Francis Ford Coppola, the restaurateur said, "We're close friends, but we're not related. I'm from the City of Naples and he's from outside." He said he knows Nicholas Cage, the director's nephew, "very well."

This is Mr. Coppola's first restaurant venture outside of the City. "We'll have to see how it works," he said. With the stamina he's demonstrated, it can hardly fail.

~Fred Burrell

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and attention, but the pier is always alive with excitement for those who make the effort to look for the beauty in what seems commonplace.

One night, my wife Misha and I heard a huge crashing in the underbrush on the pier as darkness fell. We waited expectantly, hardly daring to breathe, wondering what the immense creature could be. The immense creature turned out to be a skunk. Or there was the February afternoon we sat by the river ice and were entranced to see what must have been a small rat following a labyrinth of tunnels just under the ice at our feet.

Deer, fox, screech owl, muskrat, skunk, raccoon, rabbit and rat (snowy owl food) use the pier by night and by day. To the animals, the pier's south side

woods are an extension of Tallman Mountain State Park. These creatures leave signs that you can observe by training your eye, ear and intuition. Although sightings can happen anywhere, a key area to look is along the sides of Ferry Road as it goes from the pier gate by the ball field towards the bend in the pier known as the "dog leg."

Animal tracks abound on both sides. Most easily spotted are the deer tracks. They are more common on the south roadside by the woods, areas where the deer regularly move through the reeds and across the road. These are wide enough for human adults to walk into and look like human trails created in the reeds.

If you see a single set of tracks leading from the growth by the river past

Two rare arctic birds, a snowy owl and an ivory gull, drew excited visitors from up and down that East Coast to our pier this winter. Exotic sightings spark interest





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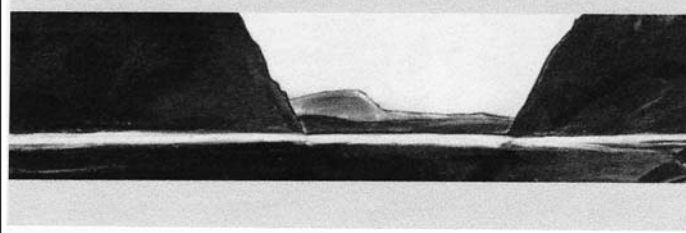
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the sewage station, you are looking at fox tracks. The best time to observe fox tracks, or any tracks, is in the morning before the pier has seen much use. Only an experienced tracker could pick them after that. By the way, an excellent resource is *Animal Tracks, a Peterson Field Guide* by Olaus J. Murie.

But don't limit yourself to tracks. Next time you think someone forgot to pick up after Fido, look carefully. Can you see fur, small bones, seeds or plant matter in the feces? You may have to break the scat to make certain. If you have success, you can consider becoming a scatologist. The Murie book will help you with this, also. In the winter, I often find weathered fox scat containing muskrat hair. The scat is usually on the road edge and looks like a dirty scrap of grey.

The pier is more alive than you may realize. If the snowy owl captured your interest this winter, now is a good time to look for those of our kin who have always been just around the corner. There's more magic around you than you think.

~John Leeds

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. It is on a site maintained by fellow Piermonter Richie Stark.

In Memoriam

Molly Masucci (Hunt) Knight, daughter of Joseph Masucci and Leah Witofsky, died on August 7, 2007. She was born December 24th, 1928 in Nyack NY. Molly graduated from Tappan Zee High School, Piermont 1944. Molly was a Piermont resident for 55 years and still has many relatives there.

Her love and kindness were felt by all who knew her, and her love will live on always in our hearts. Molly is survived by her four loving children, Leah Pardillo (Hunt), Lauren Grennan (Hunt), Leonard Hunt, Joseph Hunt, Patricia O'toole and grandchildren Jesse and Matthew Pardillo, Sean and Molly Grennan, Emily and Anthony Hunt. She is also survived by her stepchildren Sally Harder, George Gordon Knight Jr. and Sandra Larkin.

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President's Corner



When Piermont's firefighting volunteers battle a blaze, rescue a boater or march in a parade, they are representing the village and they make us all proud. When they join one side of a political controversy they also are representing the village and it is a very different matter.

For more than four years anti-war protesters have faced counter protesters at the Nanuet four corners, just as they did during the Vietnam War. I've always thought these weekend demonstrations were an inspiring display of freedom of expression.

However, a few weeks ago the protests at the corner of Route 59 and Middletown Road became much more controversial. That's when West Nyack firefighters showed up with a fire truck and joined the counter protesters. Many were outraged that they had used a taxpayer bought truck for political purposes.

The following week more than 100 volunteer firemen—including a contingent from Piermont—joined the counter protesters. This time, in an obvious effort to avoid the argument about the truck, they came with one paid for by Pearl River volunteers themselves.

The firefighters argue that all they are saying is, "We Support Our Troops," and that's not a political statement. It is true that the plain language of the phrase expresses a sentiment that is overwhelming popular. But if you honestly believe that those

words aren't loaded with political meaning you are being naïve to the extreme.

Unfortunately, as the American public has turned against the war in Iraq, the phrase, "We Support Our Troops," has become code for those supporting the war. It implies that people who want to bring the troops home and out of harm's way are somehow against the troops. That argument defies good sense. I have yet to hear of an American who is not supporting our troops.

Our wonderful fire fighting men and women have every right to hold political opinions as individuals or as a group, but please don't drag the good name of the Piermont Fire Department into the controversy.

~Bob Samuels



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THE FRONT LINE

Police Department:

New number for overnighters: The phone number for overnight parking permission has been changed. The new number is 359-1258, ext.345. Please remember that permission to park overnight on Piermont streets is reserved for special circumstances or emergencies, says Police Chief Michal O'Shea. It is not to be used for routine parking.

PAL News: The Rittenberg field dedication was well attended and the field has been improved, thanks to the generous donation made by the Rittenberg family. The Police Athletic League would like to thank the Rittenberg family, the Village Board, the Fire Department and the many volunteers who helped with the dedication.

Fears that the Pier would be swamped with vehicles under the new rule permitting car traffic for all have not come to pass, according to Chief O'Shea. Traffic has been moderate. It is expected to pick up somewhat when new signs are posted outlining the new parking rules. Parking for everybody is allowed only at the DEC-marked spaces at the end of the Pier. Parking elsewhere is reserved exclusively for permit holders. Piermont residents can get a free permit at the Village Clerk's office.



Highway Department Annual Open House, Tommy Temple and JJ Savage. Photo by Sally Savage

Highway Department:

Next in line for maintenance work in the village, according to Al Bartley, DPW Supervisor, are the following projects: Sidewalk replacement on Piermont Avenue from the Grandview village line south to Bay Street.

Sidewalk replacement for house #595 south to #503 Piermont Avenue and at the end of Paradise Avenue. New curbs on Hester Street, Tate Avenue and Franklin Street.

Other infrastructure repairs and maintenance that are scheduled are described at the Department of Public Works website, www.villagedpw.com. Projects Department of Public Works include repairing a breach in the dam on Ferdon Ave. and seeking funds to rebuild the historic bridge over Sparkill Creek.

Fire Department:

Their just desserts: The 19th annual Rockland Road Runners race benefits the Piermont Volunteer Ambulance Corps. Proceeds from the 10-mile race along the Hudson River were divided between volunteer responders from Piermont, Nyack and South Nyack.

After 9/11, the Runners Runners race committee has focused on benefiting first responders in the local area. For past races, Piermont's and the other river communities' ambulance corps have stayed on standby, ready to assist, if necessary. In return, the Road Runners have chosen this way to repay them for their services.

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Is This Next Year's Fashion?



Piermonter Jon Satin is on a mission. Three months ago he quit his job after working for years in junior fashions. As the trend toward "green" extends from food toward clothing, Satin wants to turn away from clothes made of cotton to those made from organic and recycled materials.

He is starting a new company based on organic fabrics. Products used in making them include hemp, bamboo, soybeans (for stretch) and wood pulp. Satin's fabrics will also use recycled rags, acrylic, cashmere and cashmere blends. He will use hemp bags for packaging, boxes made from recycled cardboard and labels from recycled paper.

Satin will be funded largely by the Podar conglomerate group in India, owners of 11,000 acres of organic farms, with a designated 100,000 acres

in sight within the decade. To create organic farms, millions of earthworms were brought to the Podar fields. Their castings become a soil nutrient and fertilizer. "If the crop is grapes, for example, the grapes grown organically are now twice the size they would have been, with a lot more flavor," says Satin.

Three countries produce organically-grown crops— India, Turkey, and the United States, with Turkey accounting for 50% of the total. In the U.S. the companies who have led the way in putting "green" clothes on their shelves have been Walmart (which has received much-needed good press for their efforts) and Sam's Club. According to Satin, Walmart hired an expert to determine what this change would cost them, expecting to hear millions, and was told it would not be costly and that they would, in fact, make a huge profit by going green.

Other companies getting into organic fabrics are Champion (athletic

wear), Chaus, Liz Clairborne who has started a division called Pure and Jordache, which is also backing Satin's company. Target and H&M are putting organic clothes in all of their stores. Whole Foods put "green" clothes into 25% of their stores' space and the response caused them to make it 50%, with the rest of the store devoted to food. For shoppers' information, "organically all through" means 95% of the fabric has been organically grown.

Satin is motivated by the suicide rate of farmers, plus the fact that thousands of farmers in India raising cotton die from cancers caused by insecticides. As he puts it, one tee shirt equals one cup of insecticide. Cotton may no longer be king. As a crop, it is number one as far as the amount of insecticide used in its production (coffee is number two.) "We drape ourselves in chemicals," Satin says.

He put it in a nutshell: "It's my passion, it's my mission."

~Rosemary Cone



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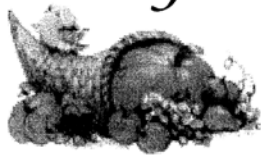
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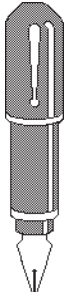
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Join Us! The Piermont Civic Association is a nonprofit group dedicated to the betterment of Piermont. Thanks to membership dues, numerous fundraising events and countless hours of volunteer work, Piermont has its *Newsletter*, Main Street has its trees, bike rack and flower pots, Kane Park has its gazebo and the Community Playgroup, Empire Hose and PAL have received generous donations, to name a few PCA accomplishments. Please mail this application to: Piermont Civic Association, Box 454, Piermont, NY 10968 I have enclosed: \$_____ 2007 PCA Family Membership (\$25 includes the *Newsletter*)

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Readers Write

The tenants of the Diplomat Gardens in Piermont are our valued neighbors ("Condo conversion chases out Piermont tenants," Sunday Journal News.) It is most distressing that their need for affordable housing in our area is disregarded by the new property owners in the name of profit only. These new owners (from outside New York state) have no interest in our maintaining a "community" here in Piermont. This is what makes living in Piermont unique and special, not just "stunning river views" and "village charm."

I have been following the tireless work on behalf of the tenants' rights by the Piermont Neighborhood Housing Coalition. It is my hope that they will succeed, with the support of the Piermont community, in protecting

the homes of our neighbors. Thanks to Denise Kronstadt and her organization!

Holly Macklay

I was dismayed to learn that the Diplomat Gardens in Piermont had been sold and that it was going to become a condominium. Diplomat Gardens is the only affordable rental housing in the area, and at \$1,100 to \$1,500 a month it's not even that affordable.

Though it would be nice to imagine that people who live in this apartment complex could just buy their apartments or find another affordable place to rent nearby, my sense is that that is not the case. Affordable housing is a crisis in this part of Rockland. It's a problem that just about everyone here

agrees we need to address, but no one seems to be able to do much about.

The new owners of the Diplomat bought it, no doubt, to make money. That's their prerogative I guess. But we must be concerned about what this means to our community and especially to the lives of the people affected.

My house overlooks the Round Tree and Lawrence Park Condominiums, Diplomat Gardens and a group of stores along Route 9W. We live along a highway and yet it's a friendly kind of neighborhood.

Today when I looked out from my driveway at the little corner that I have come to love, I wondered about my neighbors and what will happen to them. Can we really afford to allow working people to just be forced out of this area? Is that how it is? I hope not.

Daniel Lukens

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but I had to tell myself that this is what the residents want."

There is nothing he did not love about being mayor, he says today. He'll even miss marching at the head of the Memorial Day parade and performing marriages. He has joined an astounding 30 couples and says all of them are still together.

Being mayor of Piermont is a part-time job. In his other life, Traynor, sells and designs tropical plant installations in hotels and other public buildings. He and his wife Debbie, an airline executive, live across the street from the Village Hall in a house they renovated. When they sell it they hope to find another in the village that they can fix up.

They've raised three boys in Piermont. Since he and his wife both worked, it depended on the library and the PAL with other various programs, to help look after their sons. "I always felt that I should give back to the community for that," he said, "I felt becoming mayor was a way to do that. I feel great about what I have accomplished. I have no regrets whatsoever."

~Bob Samuels



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Village Budget Lite

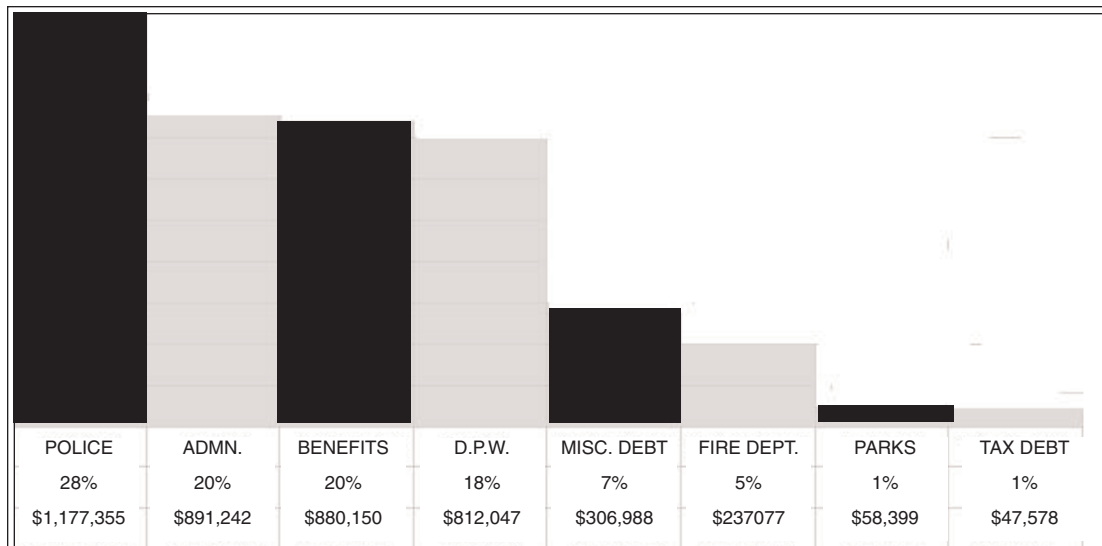
Here in condensed form are your village taxes at work. Expenses for the fiscal year beginning June 1, 2007 total \$4.4 million.

The budget is financed by homesteads (most properties) which pay

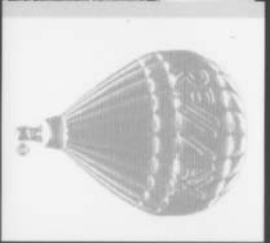
\$4.85 per \$1000 of assessed value and non-homesteads (commercial, etc.) which pay \$7.28 per \$1000 of assessed value. A 5.44 percent tax increase for homesteads and 7.06 percent for non-homesteads is new this year. "Before

this year, the tax situation was an unequal hodgepodge that led to lawsuits," said Trustee Fred Devan. "Now, everybody pays at a fair rate."

The complete budget is available from the Clerk's office at 359-1258.



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