

# The Piermont Newsletter

VOLUME XXXXIV NO. 2

PUBLISHED BY THE PIERMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION

FALL 2014

## Piermont's New Channel

Piermont residents looking south across Piermont Bay after dusk now see a string of navigation markers, blinking red or green. Tappan Zee Contractors, the folks building the new bridges, put the markers there to mark a safe path to Piermont's shores from the main channel of the Hudson River.

The markers help Piermont's marina businesses, which were hit hard by Hurricane Sandy. They are now challenged by the bridge construction, particularly the safety-related "no-go" zone established on the river, stretching a mile and a quarter south of the bridge span.

Mayor Chris Sanders is enthusiastic about the new marked channel: "It is a great thing for Piermont's businesses. People out there in their boats can see the best way to get into our marinas." The mayor, a boater himself, knows what those now cruising the east coast for fishing, sailing and recreation know—visiting vacationing boaters bring communities lots of business without the vehicular traffic usually associated with tourism.

But the marking of the Piermont channel is only partly complete. "The final two western-most markers leave a boater headed toward the shallows of the "catcher's mitt", the corner of Piermont Bay at Parelli Park," says Tappan Zee Marina's Roger Schneider. Missing is a continuation of the channel that is navigable by most watercraft. Mayor Sanders expects to be discussing this with Brian Coneybear, the Governor's representative on the project, in the coming weeks.

The Coast Guard signed off on the location of the channel, but there remain questions about the depth of water mapped by Tappan Zee Contractors. Piermont Trustee Mark Blomquist and fellow Piermont Dive Team member Dan Goswick found significant



*Channel markers being set into place Photo by Bob Samuels*

deviations in some parts of the channel. "There is no question that boaters using the channel need to use the center for passage, and pay close attention to tide levels," says Blomquist.

Tappan Zee Constructors permits require them to provide access to recreational boaters. But what Piermont needs is for it to dredge the new marked channel. "This is the one thing we really need" says Suren Kilerciyan, owner of Cornetta's Marina since 1978. This spring, he sent Governor Cuomo more than 800 signatures asking for dredging out to the main channel of the Hudson. Kilerciyan has the permits he needs to dredge his own marina. He hopes he will be able to connect to a newly dredged channel.

Since it opened in 1955, the bridge's many pilings and anchors has contributed to the silting of Piermont Bay by slowing the flow of water. The two

new spans have far fewer pilings. Some think silting might decrease.

As we wait for a clear, fully navigable channel, the village loses a tremendous opportunity for water-related business, Kilerciyan points out. More than marinas are affected, he adds. Piermont shops and restaurants could be buzzing with vacationing boaters, fall foliage tours, folks visiting with fishermen's derbies, all arriving by water.

Tappan Zee Contractors has agreed to maintain the channel and its markers until it finishes building the bridges but then no one knows what will happen after that. For now, boaters on this stretch of the Hudson have a partial blinking red and green route through shallow water. It's a start.

~Margaret Grace

# President's Corner



Piermont took a brutal beating from Hurricane Sandy. Experts tell us it was a coming attraction for even more destructive storms climate change promises. Our village isn't ignoring the warning. It has begun to plan its future, taking into account the predicted one-foot rise in the Hudson over the next 50 years.

For the last nine months, the Piermont Waterfront Resilience Task Force has been working on plans to lessen the impact of ocean rise and future storms on us. It's a diverse group of 14 citizens, led by Village Trustees Steve Silverberg and Lisa DeFeciani. Working with Scenic Hudson, the river watchdog organization, the NY Department of Environmental Conservation and the Consensus Building Institute, the Piermont group has set these goals:

- ~ Create a positive vision for a vibrant, resilient waterfront.
- ~ Assess risks and vulnerabilities along the Piermont waterfront.
- ~ Identify adaptation needs, opportunities and strategies.
- ~ Develop recommendations for intermediate and long-term actions.

The big, longer term questions the Task Force has already identified include asking whether we should build some kind of a barrier, a wall or reef, to protect our low lying areas. Will we need to raise some of our streets, houses and commercial buildings? To allow that, do we need to change our building codes? Must we abandon some buildings? Should our downtown move to higher ground? The smaller issues include finding ways to alert residents to dangerous conditions, locating safe parking areas, ensuring that our most vulnerable residents are safe.

It is reassuring to know that Piermont's government is planning for the future. Most governments and citizens aren't, despite scientists repeatedly telling us that the atmosphere has become overloaded with carbon dioxide and global warming is underway.

Perhaps one reason those warnings are ignored is the slogan, "Saving the Earth." It turns people off. The idea of saving the earth seems both vague and overwhelming. And, if you really think about it, it doesn't make any sense. It is us


that need saving, not the earth. If we were all to disappear like the dinosaurs, the earth would not miss us at all. It would merrily go on spinning until the sun burned out.

Give the earth a few hundred thousand years without us (a blink of an eye in geologic time); and all would be pristine. The atmosphere would clear and the acid levels in the oceans would return to normal. Even those monstrous islands of plastic junk in the Pacific would disappear. Our footprints would be harder to find than Neanderthals are today.

Good for Piermont. We've taken the first steps to save ourselves.

~Bob Samuels

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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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## The Last Of The Three Graces

With the retirement of Grace Mitchell on June first, the Piermont Library says goodbye to the last of The Three Graces\*. It was some time ago that Grace Radin served on the board, but we have since had two Graces on our library staff—both with the last initial M. Much confusion reigned after 1978, when they were referred to as “The Graces.”. For this piece, Grace Mitchell will be Grace and Grace Meyer will be Grace M. ! Fortunately theirs has always been a mutually appreciative friendship.

In 1978, when Grace’s small son enrolled in the nearby Community Playgroup , on whose board Grace served for ten years), she started volunteering at the Library then located on Hudson Terrace. When Paula Scholz, the Piermont Public Library’s former ‘Childrens’ Librarian’ moved in 1979, Director Grace Meyer had a choice of several replacement candidates, but made the fortuitous choice of Mitchell to become as Assistant to the Director in April of that year. Besides the usual librarian duties, Grace was asked by the Board to take on the essential task of grant writing. Her writing talents also later supplied the PCA newsletter with library news, often accompanied by her own delightful drawings.

Throughout, Grace always had a special rapport with the children visiting the library and has contributed not only to life in the library but in so many ways to Piermont in general - quietly and without fanfare. Grace Meyer says that she was so happy that Grace remained after she herself retired, since: “...she was the perfect person to help Piermont make the transition from the old Library to the new.”

With our new library came the great opportunities, and space, to host a variety of cultural events. As an arts supporter, Grace threw herself enthusiastically into curating the variety of speakers, concerts, exhibits, and receptions that have made our library a lively, accessible, focal point of the village. She stuck with it from the start - up that steep hill on Hudson Terrace with its fifteen steps—and contributed to the village in all those ways for more than thirty-six years.

With a keen interest in history, Grace also became a member of the Piermont Historical Society. With an equally keen interest in environmental causes, she served on the Piermont Conservation Advisory Commission and as Village representative to the Rockland Environmental Management Council.

With Grace’s retirement, we can drag her out of her closely guarded painter’s closet and celebrate her second life as a superb artist. Not exactly a “secret life” but she never let her



Grace Mitchell at Library Halloween event.

need to paint interfere with her job as librarian. To quote her: “I had always done artwork, and since childhood been considered an ‘artist’ by my family, friends, teacher and classmates but had never taken it particularly seriously”. She attributes moving to ‘beautiful Piermont’ as the inspiration to continue her artwork (being a proud owner of one of her paintings, I do not believe she would ever have been able not to paint). Grace is represented in several national and local galleries and of course in private collections. Barbara Gibson gallery, then in Nyack, first exhibited her work. Later, Grace was represented by the Allen Sheppard gallery, then in our Flywheel Park, and now by the Hubert Gallery in New York.

The Library will miss her. Piermont children now grown still visited her there. We wish her well as she now has time to continue those gorgeous paintings. As for The Three Graces, Google tells me they were said to have been created “to fill the world with pleasant moments and good will.”

What better could we wish Grace Mitchell on her retirement?

\*Several different versions have been attributed to these ladies. According to the Greek poet Pindar: Aglaia symbolized Beauty, Euphrosyne the grace of Delight, and Thalia the grace of Blossom.

~Sally Savage



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# 175th Anniversary Of The Piermont Reformed Church



Piermont Reformed Church in the snow. Photo by Sally Savage

Many Piermonters have passed through the doors of Piermont Reformed Church, the white wooden church that stands as an architectural gem on Ferdon Avenue.

In recent times, you may have been among the guests as the small but active Protestant church hosted a benefit dinner for the fire department, an Antiques Appraisal Day, or a Holiday Concert featuring many of our local performing artists. Your family may have been among those of all faiths

who have come to the church on a winter night to help feed and shelter homeless men and women through the Helping Hands Safe Haven Program. Your child's scout troop or Leo's Club may have been there too.

If you have lived in our village for any length of time, the chances are also good that you have attended the wedding or funeral of a friend or neighbor, or been a welcome guest at a holiday service.

The church has touched a lot of lives as its history now spans 175 years, mak-

ing it the longest continuous institution in Piermont.

It was founded in 1839 as the First Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Piermont, by Cornelius Blauvelt, Abraham Vervalen, William Lawrence and Erie Railroad baron Eleazer Lord, who left the Tappan Reformed Church to start a new congregation in what Lord hoped would be his transportation and commercial capital. The new congregation held its early worship services in a home on Ash Street, just downhill from the train station. In 1850 the group moved into its large new building along Sparkill Creek on Ferdon Avenue, on land donated by John Ferdon. At the time, that location put the church in the center of the action, overlooking the railroad that ran from the Hudson to Lake Erie, in what Lord envisioned as the business center of Piermont.

Visitors who park in the lot behind the church will see a small meditation space with two benches whose seats are stone slabs from that first buildings steps, one of which has a boot scraper embedded in it for muddy feet. There is also a granite block there, which was the carriage stone placed by the road to help ladies descend from the carriages in which they rode to church.

That, however, is almost all that remains from that first structure. For despite its quaint appearance, the current building was only erected following a terrible fire in 1944, which destroyed the old church completely. The earlier building was actually a great deal larger than the new one, with a higher steeple that held a clock and large cast bell. It was



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also set farther from the street, on an elevated yard with retaining wall like the two houses to the east of the church grounds.

The longtime residents of our community still use the term "Dutch Reformed Church," recalling its history and heritage. It was indeed Dutch for a few short years, when most members were named Blauvelt. It belongs to the Reformed Church in America, whose roots are in the 16th century Reformation in the Netherlands, and the settling of this area by that nation. Its beliefs, governance, and spiritual practice is similar to those of Presbyterians and other "mainline" protestant Christians. Piermont's church is now typical for this area in offering a generous and progressive interpretation of this tradition.

Until recently, mainline Protestants were people of social power and influence, and this tended to be true in the early part of the church's history as well. Wealthier residents living on the hill or in Grand View tended to make up the membership, while less affluent working people lived by the river (things have changed!) and were usually Catholic or Baptist. But there were exceptions to this rule, such as Slovaki-ans of Hungarian descent, who came out of Calvinist traditions. Gradually, such social division broke down, in spite of the fact that into the 1960's Protestants and Catholics equally condemned each other and threatened excommunication for anyone who set foot on the enemy's territory.

However, people are people, and Piermont is Piermont. Boys and girls got married, combining families, and hos-

tilities were replaced by caring about each other. When the Dutch church burned, Catholic neighbors showed kindness and generosity, which was remembered and repaid when St. John's burned later. Love for neighbor rightly trumped doctrine.

There were other ways in which community was built. Dr. William Vandever Berg, the 20th and longest-serving pastor (1931-57), was also the leader of Piermont's Boy Scout Troop. There are still middle-aged men around who remember learning scout craft from Dr. Berg, and traveling with him to camp in Vermont.

As the 24th pastor, I have now been privileged to live and serve here for 25 years. I have probably seen greater change that all my predecessors combined. I was greeted by a congregation that included mill workers as well as doctors. There were members who had hunted for food on Clausland Mountain in their youth, and had never been to Manhattan. The oldest member of the congregation was the retired school nurse, Waldine Zinnel of Palisades, who had taught most of Piermont's children how to brush their teeth (to "Miss Zinnel"'s satisfaction, that is). The hulking shell of the Gair factory loomed over the river, and featured in the first exhibit of paintings I viewed in the old library on Hudson Terrace. I've seen the condos go up, houses fall and rise, and businesses and people come and go.

When I arrived, I was told, often, that anyone here for less than thirty years should expect to be called a newcomer. After twenty-five, I wonder if the rules have changed. I feel like an old-timer because I have come to value the old-timers around me - the immigrants, the retired laborers and housewives, the veterans of wars and of more floods than any of us ever hope to see. I treasure them and their stories. Of course I welcome the newcomers too, because I was one once, and for the excitement, the life experience, the insights, and the perhaps broader perspective they bring. My hope for everyone, in spite of our growing pains, in spite of this generation's version of division and mistrust, is that people will continue to be people, and Piermont will continue to be Piermont, and that once again love of neighbor will trump whatever obstacle can possibly arise.

~John VandenOever, Pastor, Piermont Reform Church

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# The Piermont Marsh—September 2014 Update

In front of a packed Village Hall, Betsy Blair, of the NY State Dept. of Environmental Conservation, and Ed McGowan of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, gathered input from residents and concerned citizens about the “Piermont Marsh Restoration” plan that is part of the contract for construction of the new Tappan Zee bridges.

The attendees at the April 22 meeting were overwhelmingly opposed to the plan to eradicate Phragmites in the Piermont marsh, and uniformly opposed to the use of herbicides in any effort to do so.

It was the final questions to Ms. Blair and Mr. McGowan which were most telling. Will herbicides be taken out of the DEC’s “toolbox” if Phragmites eradication goes forward? “No.” Does the DEC or PIPC have a long-range plan in place for the Piermont Marsh? “No, it does not.”

In July, Mayor Chris Sanders presented a resolution to the Village Board that was passed unanimously and sent to the DEC and to Governor Cuomo’s office, reflecting the fact that the Village has standing and interest as neighboring municipality.

The resolution states that the Piermont Village Board “..believes that the Piermont Marsh, in its current condition provides significant protection to life and property on Village Residents from storm surge and wave action”, and that in its current condition “is a critical aesthetic resource, providing significant economic benefit to the Village and plays a role in our tourist economy.” The Board also noted in its findings that there is “significant opposition” by Village residents to the use of herbicide in the marsh. And that as the governing body of the neighboring municipality, the resolution states, the Piermont Village Board “strongly objects to the original “Compensatory Mitigation Plan”, has critical interest in mitigation efforts in the Piermont Marsh, and demands to be officially involved with any further planning regarding the Marsh.”

On August 27th in a letter to Mayor Sanders. Trustees and interested parties, Ms. Blair said that based on “your suggestions”, “...we first develop a comprehensive, long-term plan for the marsh.” For those closely watching the handling of this “Mitigation Plan”, understanding what is there and impacts of any action before it is taken would have

seemed an obvious goal from the beginning. “The original plan, which would have continued the DEC’s history of ongoing herbicide application to kill existing plants and habitats not considered “native” in order to “restore” marshland, seemed to be blindly applied to Piermont Marsh. I hope we have spared our marsh that fate, and shed some light on herbicide use in our marshlands that must stop”.says marsh neighbor, Laurie Leahey.

Goals for the marsh included in the August 27th letter include:

1. Sustain native marsh communities and the biodiversity they support
2. Promote Marsh resiliency to sea level rise
3. Maintain and enhance the marsh’s ability to provide storm protection
4. Increase scientific knowledge and public understanding of the marsh.

As part of the what the DEC characterizes and development of a plan, an initial public meeting has been scheduled for Sept. 30th at 6pm at Village Hall: Piermont Marsh Planning: Fact Finding Meeting 1: What do we know about Piermont Marsh, past and present? Local scientists will give presentations about what they know about the history of Piermont Marsh, the present plant composition, and other organisms that live in the marsh, followed by a panel discussion.

As we go to press, the news that the Piermont Marsh Restoration Plan’s funding survived the cuts to the overall Bridge construction - funding that was to dip into the coffers of Clean Water Act - money meant for just that, clean water, sewer upgrades, etc. It is no secret that the Piermont Marsh is fed by the Sparkill Creek, whose intense pollution is a significant contributor to the marsh ecology. Resident’s are hopeful the funding’s connection to Clean Water Act will steer a Marsh Restoration plan that will offer outcomes that will better enable the understanding and mitigation of the sources of pollution and take action that will result in a real contribution to the health of the Marsh.

~Margaret Grace



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# Lighthouse Compromise!

The Piermont Village Board and the group who wants to put a memorial lighthouse at the end of the pier have apparently reached a compromise about its location. It would replace the erector set-style steel tower that holds the fire department siren and cell phone antennas near the racks where the rowing club stores its boats.

The lighthouse, according to Deputy Mayor Mark Blomquist, would be much taller than the one originally planned and would contain both the fire department and cell phone equipment. It also would serve as a land beacon, Blomquist pointed out, for the boats following the newly marked channel into the village marinas.

The memorial lighthouse proposal had been a tough issue for the Village Board. At its August meeting, Mayor Chris Sanders reported that he and its other members had received more e-mails and phone calls against erecting a lighthouse at the end of the pier than they have had about any other issue. Piermonters, he said, were against it.

Many felt that the end of the pier of already had enough memorials.

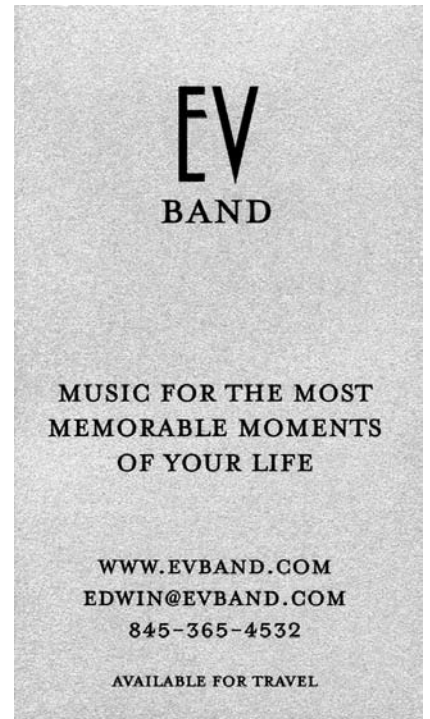
Despite the public outcry, the Board found it almost impossible to say no that night to Raymond Lennon, who heads the effort to build a lighthouse. He is the brother of Mark Lennon, who was killed last summer with Lindsay Stewart, when the speedboat they were in slammed into construction barge near the Tappan Zee Bridge. The fatal outing began at a Piermont marina. The driver of the boat, Jojo John, has pleaded guilty to driving the boat while intoxicated. He was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison.

The tragedy that packed an emotional wallop that went far beyond Piermont. The story made headlines around the country. Lindsay was soon to be a bride, and Mark was scheduled to be the best man at the wedding. Both were just 30 years old. The memorial group generated enormous compassion. It had already raised \$100,000 to build a steel lighthouse on the concrete dock at the end of the pier.

After listening to the proposal, only Mayor Sanders was able to plainly say he opposed it. He suggested that perhaps the group could put the money it had raised into some kind of scholarship fund. The other Board members suggested relocating it to other spots on the end of the pier.

The new proposal seems a perfect compromise.

~Bob Samuels




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A delicious lunch will be available from Anna's Kitchen, along with homemade soups and baked goods.

## At The Library

In keeping with the long tradition of utilizing the large pool of talent among the residents of the Piermont area, we are happy to announce that local residents Heidi and Daniel Spitzer will lead a photo and video presentation at the library on Sunday, November 19th at 2pm. The title of their exciting and unique presentation is Love and Death on the African Savannah: A Video and Photo Exploration. Their presentation will touch upon an area of the globe that very few people are lucky enough to experience as it will focus on the ecosystem of the Okevanga Delta region of Northwest Botswana. The videos and photos will highlight the interplay of the many different species which congregate in close proximity in this fertile area. Birth and Death, Love and Aggression and Beauty and Horror will be amply documented. As such, please keep in mind that this presentation is for mature audience members and is not suitable for children. We're proud to host two members of the

community who can share such a rare view into this world.

This fall and winter, the library will continue to exhibit artwork with distinctive styles and mediums. In October, we are pleased to welcome John VandenOever who is the pastor of the Piermont Reformed Church. Mr. VandenOever is also a musician, songwriter, and visual artist. He studied music before theology and, while at his first parish in Flushing, he studied drawing and painting at Queens College. Mr. VandenOever's exhibit, entitled "Observed and Reported," will include portrait, still life, landscape paintings, prints, drawings and photographs. Please join us for the Artist's Reception on Sunday, October 5th from 2pm to 4pm.

After a long and distinguished career in the service of the United Nations, primarily with UNICEF, Ms. Cecilia Lotse turned her attention to art and the library is delighted to exhibit her

artwork during the month of November. Ms. Lotse's medium of preference is watercolor and, after a career which was highly analytical in focus, her art tends towards the romantic and to a contemplation of mood. Her exhibition is entitled "The Coast of Maine" as it is the untamed nature of the coast that inspired Ms. Lotse. Please join us for the Artist's Reception on Sunday, November 2nd from 2pm to 4pm.

The village Holiday Festival will be here before you know it! As part of the festival, the annual Gift of Art Show Open House will take place on Sunday, December 7th, from 2pm to 4pm. The theme of this year's show, back by popular demand is "A Postcard From Piermont." A wide variety of local artists are invited to take part in the show, with part of the proceeds benefiting our fund to continue to provide quality programming for the community. The works of art are generally affordable and make for thoughtful and unique holiday gifts for friends and family



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members. Please join us, and your neighbors, at the reception for some conversation, hors d'oeuvres and a chance to support the library.

We will have our annual Halloween Pizza Party on Thursday, October 30th, from 5 to 6pm for all ages so be sure to bring your best costume and your appetite. Want to enjoy being board instead of bored with the kids? Come over for Family Game Night on Friday, November 14, from 6 to 8:00pm.

Some of the more eagle-eyed readers may notice a different name at the end of this letter. After 36 years of exemplary service, Grace Mitchell retired this spring. Ms. Mitchell was integral in cultivating the library's local history collection and excelled at answering the many questions the library received on the history of Piermont and its former residents. The library was well served by her personal passion for art during her tenure as she curated the monthly art shows and was responsible for the cultural programs enjoyed by our patrons. A brick in the library's Path of Friends inscribed, "Many thanks to Grace Mitchell" will serve as a lasting tribute. We wish her all the best in her retirement.

~Staff of the Piermont Library

For more information on any of the events at the Piermont Public Library, please feel free to contact us at (845) 359-4595 or check us out on our website [www.piermontlibrary.org](http://www.piermontlibrary.org)

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# Keeping Dry In The Next Sandy



Home construction on Paradise Avenue. Fred Burrell photo

Faced by the likelihood of more Sandy-like storms, Piermont homeowners are moving their vulnerable utilities up and out of harm's way.

Piermont Building inspector Charles Schaub said that around 120 homes were damaged by Sandy. As protection against the next big storm, 30 or 40 homeowners have raised stoves, furnaces and major appliances to a level above the first floor. One homeowner put his hot water heater in the

attic, had electrical outlets placed high on the walls of his house; removed sheet rock from the walls and replaced it with plastic wainscoting that can be washed down.

To identify areas that would be flooded in the next Sandy, drawings of the footprints of houses have been added to a FEMA map of flood zones.

As a further resource, some O&R utility poles have been marked near the base by the village engineer as a benchmark for a measurement, that, when compared a list of land elevations in the Building Inspector's office, can help a homeowner determine the vulnerability of his house relative to 100 year flood projections.

Essentially, all of the houses on the river side of Piermont Avenue that are south of Orchard Terrace were below the level of the storm's 7.8-foot surge.

FEMA regulations advise that the lowest floor of buildings in the flood area be ten feet above mean high tide in the Hudson. A recent modification of New York State building codes adds two feet of freeboard to that height if the house is being newly built.

Raising a house above the 100-year flood level may cost as much as \$100,000, Mr. Schaub said. Flood insurance paid for damages to houses caused by Sandy, but does not pay for raising a house. Mr. Schaub said that he considered the raising of a house to be economically wise over the long run.

Raising houses above anticipated flood waters may bump into height restrictions in the Villages's zoning code

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and would need a variance granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Stone houses cannot be raised, but one home owner had a concrete wall with flood gates built around his house.

The condominiums on the Pier are considered to be safe, having survived Sandy without serious flooding.

Several houses have been raised. Piermont architect Robert Hoene has designed a house on Paradise Avenue. It is on 25- to 30-foot long pilings that raise the first floor 6 to 7 feet above the street. A breakaway "skirt" (an architectural feature often associated with Atlantic Coastal construction) will be tacked onto the pilings for appearance sake.

~Fred Burrell

*Editor's note:* A link to the most recent FEMA floodplain maps can be found at [msc.fema.gov](http://msc.fema.gov).

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# The Front Line



Police Chief Michael O'Shea with "ghost car." Photo by Ron Derven

## Police Update Vehicles & Equipment

The Piermont Police Department has updated its booking, crime-fighting and emergency equipment in addition to receiving a new patrol car and an all-weather vehicle, which sounds like a hefty bill that will have to be financed through Piermont taxes. But in an ironic twist, this new equipment is being paid for by the criminals busted in Rockland County for gambling and drugs, according to Chief Michael O'Shea, Piermont Police.

Chief O'Shea, who is the immediate past president of the Rockland County Police Chief's Association, said that when criminals are convicted for drug and gambling offenses, certain properties can be confiscated and sold. The money from those sales can

be used by local police departments to upgrade their crime-fighting capabilities. Funds are allocated to the nine police departments in the county based on manpower. The Clarkstown Police Department, with 170 members in the department, receive more funds than the 9-member Piermont Police.

The equipment that the department has received includes a new electronic booking system and computer, which replaces an antiquated system of manually fingerprinting suspects. In addition, the police have a new booking camera, which was mandated by the state.

"Our old system was not effective unless you did it just right," said the chief. "Now we have a new \$17,000 system called a live scan. The booking officer rolls the prints of a suspect

that are then captured into the system and transmitted electronically to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and the FBI. Within 20 to 30 minutes, we will get a report if the suspect is wanted in another jurisdiction and if, in fact, the person is who he says he is. It is a great tool."

The police also acquired two license plate readers (LPRs). The cost to the criminals for each LPR was \$27,000. These LPRs are fixed-mounted on two patrol cars. The patrol cars can be positioned on the side of the road and monitor cars coming into Piermont. If a car is stolen or if the owner is wanted for a crime, the patrolman will know instantly. In addition, license plates can be programmed into the system. If there is an Amber Alert for a missing child, for example, and the car sets foot in Piermont, the patrolman will know immediately through a red alert generated by the system.

In addition to this new technology, the department also received a "ghost" car, a special all-weather/traffic enforcement vehicle to get around in major storms and new safety equipment from seizure funds. The so called ghost car has police markings that are quite dim during the day but bright at night. Speeders or bicyclists who are breaking the law do not realize it is a police car until they are right on it. At night, all of the markings show brightly. That way, if someone is pulled over by the ghost car, they know in fact that it is the police pulling them over.

The chief said that all of the police departments in Rockland County, the DA's office and the Sheriff's Department work closely together sharing



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services to save money for county residents. For example, the Rockland County Sheriff assists in all crime scene investigations, and handles river patrol and mounted police work in the county. The Orangetown Police handle dispatch for three departments. That way, Piermont police can be on patrol rather than monitoring phones at the station. "We have the best of both worlds," said Chief O'Shea. "We have local control so that we can respond to Piermont residents quickly and we have assistance available from other departments."

Chief O'Shea said that Piermont recently received a new a PAL van, a 4X4 Tahoe and new athletic equipment, thanks to grants that were written by Silva Welch and Piermont Detective Brian Holihan. The PAL program was devastated by Hurricane Sandy with most of the athletic equipment winding up at the bottom of the Hudson River.

In addition to PAL, the van is used by the Piermont Fire Department and local veterans groups. Chief O'Shea said that it is much safer transporting children in the van, rather than three passenger cars. He said that the police do a background check on anyone who will transport children in the van.

#### **Rubbish/Debris Collection**

Tom Temple, Supervisor of the Piermont Department of Public Works (DPW), said that the department will start its leaf collection during the week of October 20th, which will run through December 6th. "All loose leaf piles should be placed at the edge of the owner's property. All leaf piles should be clear of rocks, brush and any other debris, which could damage of collection machine. Please do not block any sidewalks with loose or bagged leaves. This causes a public safety issue by

forcing pedestrians into the roadway."

He further said that leaves that are to be bagged should be placed in biodegradable bags. The DPW supplies these bags to village residents free of charge and can be obtained from the DPW garage during regular business hours. In encouraging the use of these biodegradable bags Supervisor Temple said that the village will not collect leaves that are placed in plastic bags. As always this and other information is available on the Village's website [www.Piermont-NY.gov](http://www.Piermont-NY.gov).

#### **Fire Department Seeks Volunteers**

The Piermont Fire Department is constantly looking for new members to join its ranks. Anyone who is interested in joining the Department should come to the firehouse on any Monday evening between 7-9 pm.

~Ron Derven



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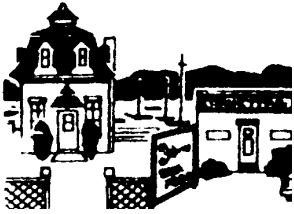
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