

The Piermont Newsletter

VOLUME I NO. 2

PUBLISHED BY THE PIERMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION

FALL 2020

At the Corner of Piermont and Ash

Is that the 1940's around the corner? Piermonters walking into the village at Ash and Main Street this Fall are presented with something of a trip back in time.

The Gair Memorial facing Piermont Avenue now fronts a new village park designed by Dan Sherman. The scrappy grass lot behind the beautiful Gair Memorial Plaque, honoring Gair Company employees that served in World War 2, has been updated to a mid-20th century look, designed by Dan Sherman of Piermont's Parks Commission. We now have a pocket park with game tables and benches that are copies of the park furniture from the 1939 World's Fair. The vintage feel of the furniture resonated with the heyday of the Gair factory, says Dan.

We can expect to see continued park additions as the Fall proceeds. "One resident is already starting an outdoor Chess Club. In addition, I have been informed by the Library that chess sets will be available for members to check out and use on the new tables", adds Mayor Bruce Tucker. By next Spring, Dan is hoping to have a shade canopy above parts of the park.

The Piermont Historical Society, working with the Chamber of Commerce, will be installing signage around the two large trees bordering the park on Piermont Avenue. "The new signs at the site of the Gair Memorial will welcome visitors to Piermont. Panels are being designed to share all that is wonderful and unique about our Village. The signs will guide visitors through the downtown where they can shop and dine. The signs will give information about additional activities in and around the Village, too. The Historical Walking Tour will give visitors the opportunity to take in Piermont's rich history. The importance of the Hudson River and our extraordinary environment will also be highlighted" says Piermont Historical Society head, Barbara Scheulen.

Just to the south of the new park is the the property that was for decades the home of Gerhardt's Garage -the Gerhardt Strasse sign is still out back. This building dates from 1938. It

has seen a careful period restoration by its new owner David Kaliff, a resident of Grandview. The lot is remarkably empty of cars now – none on blocks or waiting for a fill-up, none double parked by restaurant valets. Just the cars of the folks that work at Xyster Consulting Inc.

Xyster, David's business consulting firm is now headquartered there.

These two restorations happened in concert.

David Kaliff approached the village to acquire a 10 foot long piece of village land along Piermont Avenue that had provided some vehicle access to the rear of his

lot. Decades ago, when the factory was operating, Ash Street dead-ended just past the bank. An easement through the old Gerhardt lot to Piermont Avenue provided important trucking access to the plant. No longer. The village looked favorably on Mr. Kaliff's request, as did Phil Griffith, whose former factory property (Piermont Landing) held an easement across to Piermont Avenue. The Village had the piece of land appraised and sold it to David Kaliff for its appraised value of \$32,000.

The deal was sweetened by Kaliff's interest in seeing the long neglected Gair Memorial area, now his northern neighbor, improved. To that end he, along with an anonymous donor, provided \$50,000 for the Gair Memorial Park project. Dan Sherman was brought on board. In turn, Dan hired Carmine Gizzo of Guardia Landscape to spearhead the installation. Carmine worked with Dan years ago, digging in the original Community Garden. While Piermont's Department of Public Works prepped the new park for Dan's design, no other village funds have been utilized.

As we go to press, the awning is out at Xytster, against a warm September sun, and gardeners are setting in the last of the border plantings at the park. It is easy to envision folks gathered over a chess game, feeling a bit nostalgic at the corner of Ash St. and Piermont Avenue.

—Margaret Grace



Ash Street and Piermont Avenue—photo by Margaret Grace

Piermont Musings



Happy 25th Anniversary, Piermont Community Garden
From the Piermont Newsletter's President's Corner, October 1995

When Mayor Zahn says that the Piermont Community Garden is one of the best things to happen on his watch he's right. There was something almost magical in the way the garden came together.

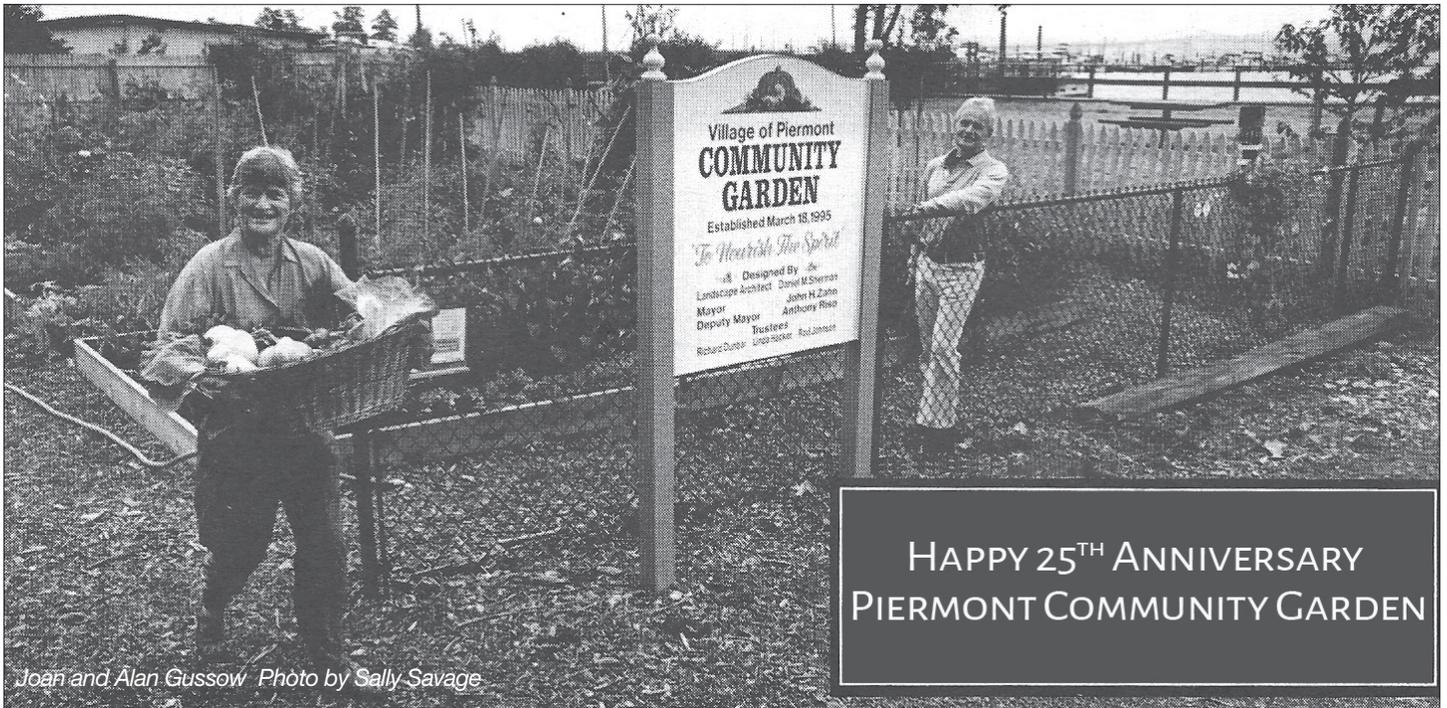
It began with a suggestion from Joan and Alan Gussow. They're Piermont newbies but longtime Rocklanders. The Gussows were serious organic gardeners long before organic gardening was cool. They wouldn't have moved here if their new backyard didn't have space for them to continue growing their own food.

The Gussows heard rumors that the village planned to pave over the property next to theirs. To anyone else, this

was a rubble strewn lot that blacktop could only improve. But the Gussows looked at that miserable patch of ground and saw a community garden.

They mentioned their idea to Barbara and Tony Riso who immediately fell in love with it. With the backing of Tony, a village trustee, and Barbara, the head of our parks commission, the concept had legs...

In hindsight, the garden's success was inevitable. "Piermont is the Place" except if you want space to park another car or grow a tomato. Most of us either live in apartments or condos with assigned parking and no garden space, or in houses with inadequate driveways and yards that are either shady, hilly, rocky, or all three. Try digging a hole and you'll soon learn that the guy that named this county ROCKland knew what he was talking about.



Joan and Alan Gussow Photo by Sally Savage

**HAPPY 25TH ANNIVERSARY
PIERMONT COMMUNITY GARDEN**

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

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This issue of *The Piermont Newsletter*, and many past issues, can be found online at <http://www.piermont-ny.com/newsletter/> thanks to volunteer Richie Stark.

What no one could have anticipated is the extent the garden united the village. Native Piermonters, like Dennis Hardy, found themselves digging alongside recent arrivals. People active in community projects shared tools and gardening tips with 9W condo owners who had never before felt part of village life. For the first time, Piermont Landingers and Main Streeters got to know each other. There were no fights, no cliques, no rivalries.

Sadly, this is unusual in Piermont. To everyone's detriment, we've often divided ourselves into competitive groups. Three cheers for the Community Garden! More than anything else in memory, it has succeeded in making our village a true community.

—Bob Samuels, October 1995

Anna Hickey, a Piermont Classic

If you want a fairly up-to-date picture of who Anna Hickey is, just google, “Anna Hickey, Piermont” and you will find a little video of Anna—then in her late eighties—playing Christmas carols on the piano-organ in her Harbor condo. And she’s still doing it, she assured me when I called her to see how she was after a series of mishaps in her 93rd year, the first of which broke her shoulder and the last of which broke two vertebrae in her neck. “That’s why all my parties have such a good reputation,” she says of her organ-playing, “especially after 11, when everyone sings.”

Anna was born in 1927, the first of the Mercurio family’s six children while her family was living in a second-floor apartment in the building now occupied by Olar. Her father settled in Piermont because it reminded him of the Bay of Naples where he was born. The family subsequently moved to what came to be known as the Mercurio house at 563 River Road, currently—as rebuilt—the Gussow house. When I asked Anna what her play was like as a child here in Piermont, she reminded me that, as the first of six, her “play” was managing her five siblings.

Even while busy mothering her siblings, Anna learned to sing well enough to do her first solo in St. John’s church at age 10. She also learned to play the violin which her father encouraged after he found her pretending to play a small plank using a twig for a bow. He traded his home-made wine for her violin lessons—one lesson, one bottle.

Anna attended both elementary and high school on the site of what is now the community center, and though she remembers crying because she couldn’t afford college, she managed to construct a very full life without it. In September 1945, just after graduating, she began her first paid job at the Marine Midland Bank in Nyack as a bookkeeper/teller, and the following August married John Hickey, a local policeman at the time and later Piermont’s Superintendent of Highways. He was also a Piermont native, born across the street from Anna and, once married, they moved just down River road to #615.

Beginning with twin girls born “nine months and three days later”, as Anna smilingly insists, the Hickeys produced five children in that home—the twins Veronica and Cecelia, plus William, Joanna, and John, and fostered five more children, so Anna spent a couple of dizzyingly busy decades raising a collection of future citizens. In the process, she taught herself piano in order to make her children practice!

Although she did some paid work at home “stretching” lace curtains, cutting and “perming” hair—as well as serving as a volunteer ambulance dispatcher—it wasn’t until 1961 that she returned to outside work and became Nyack’s Deputy Village clerk. Five years later, in 1966, County District Attorney Robert Mehan offered Anne a secretarial position, the first of a series of jobs in the judicial system that would shape the rest of her working life.

But in that same year, tragedy struck, when one of Anna’s twins, 17-year-old Veronica, fractured her neck in a trampo-

line accident and became a quadriplegic. The family refused to institutionalize her, enlarging their house to keep “Ronkie” at home. Six years later, she died in her sleep on the night of her 22nd birthday.

Less than 10 years later, in 1981, John Hickey died unexpectedly of a heart attack at the much-too-young age of 56, leaving Anna in charge of their large family. Anna continued working at various jobs in the judicial system

including a stint investigating Medicare and Medicaid fraud, and in October, 1990 she was appointed to what turned out to be the career for which she was born—Commissioner of Jurors, a job she held and loved until her retirement, 15 years later.

Her assignment was to recruit and screen potential jurors in order to provide each judge with a panel of whatever size the judge needed, sometimes as many as 150 for a difficult case. From these panels 8 jurors would be chosen for a civil case and 12 for a criminal case.

She loved the job—interacting with all those people every day, and they loved her, even though her job was to summon them to a task they often initially resented. Here is a quote from a letter written to Anna in 1995—mid career. “Because of your upbeat demeanor you make a civic responsibility, which in some cases is less than desirable and an encroachment on an individual’s time, a very rewarding and satisfying experience.”

In 2000 Anna sold her River Road home and moved to her beautiful Harbor Cove condo. Two years later, at 76—too young she now says—she retired. Meanwhile her family had continued to grow. She presently has five grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren.

She has also been President of Piermont’s VFW for 56 years, has headed the Democratic Club, subsequently the Democratic Committee, and is now a Democratic Committeewoman Emerita. Her commitment to her Catholic faith and St. John’s Church has been remarkable. For decades, as a member of Catholic Daughters of America, called the Court of St. Anne’s at St. John’s, Anna provided their annual holiday charity bazaar and lunch with vast quantities of her famous Pasta Fazool and Sausage and Peppers, loved by generations of Piermonters.

She’s cut back some now that her broken neck is in a brace, which also prevents her playing the violin. It needs repair anyway, she says. But if you get invited to a party once she recovers, you’re sure to get an organ recital. —Joan Gussow



Anna Hickey celebrates her birthday.

The Many Names of Piermont

The Dutch settlers would sail several miles up the river before they could find an opening through the high rocky cliffs. This land beyond their New Amsterdam home was a wilderness that offered no overland access. To reach the promise of the new land, they would have to find a water passage to the interior. They found what they needed in a narrow tidal creek that threaded its way through marsh grass.

In time, a trading post and grist mill were established about a mile up that creek, and a small community grew up around them. Sloops could make their way from the river (called the North River, later the Hudson) up the creek (the Dutch called it the Slote) and transfer goods at the trading post's landing, then gather goods for the return to points along the river.

The area became known as Tappan Slote or Tappan Landing. The word "Tappan" gradually fell into disuse, and the place became simply the Landing. This name held until sometime after 1783, when Major Peter Taulman purchased the trading-post-turned-general-store from a man named Abraham Mabie.

Mabie had been operating the store since well before the Revolution, but his name never became attached to the place. Taulman's did. The area became Taulman's Landing.

Eventually another settlement sprang up downstream to compete with Taulman's Landing. In 1824 Judge Cornelius I. Blauvelt decided that there should be an alternative to the arduous trip that ships had to make up the creek. Sloops often had to be towed or poled up the creek to reach Taulman's Landing. Blauvelt's solution was to build

a plank road across the marsh to reach the open water of the Hudson.

Now river-going vessels could dock at the end of the road, and goods and passengers could be exchanged. A small community, drawn by commerce, grew up in the area. The place was called Peggy's Point, named for a woman who kept an inn there.

In ten year's time, Blauvelt would join forces with a man named Eleazar Lord in a project that would forever change the village in many ways. When the community was chosen as the eastern terminus of the new New York & Erie Railroad, Lord and Blauvelt made themselves owners of significant amounts of property. And the community was about to get a new name.

Before 1891 the U.S. had no written policy for the names of post offices. A post office name could be the name of its town, or a township, or a neighborhood, or place of business, or even the postmaster's name.

The post office in what is now Piermont went through a number of name changes. Until March of 1815, it was called Tappan or the Landing. Then it became Orange, a name that stayed until April of 1834. At that time, it changed to Slote. Slote lasted for all of three weeks; by the end of the month it had been changed to Tappan, a name that lasted until June of 1839. In 1839, the post office took the name – Piermont – that had been created by Eleazar Lord, an amalgam of the railroad's pier into the Hudson, and the hills or mountains that surrounded the town.

Eleven years later the village was incorporated as Piermont, N.Y. —*Ralph Titus*

Piermont Historical Society's 2020 Time Capsule

2020 has been a year like no other. Historians will have their say about the global pandemic and the emotional and economic devastation it has caused. They will write about the Political climate and how the nation has divided. They will write about the uprising for justice and equality.

There will be data about the numbers of deaths, about jobs lost, about the changes in real estate. There will be statistics of the number of children who lost time from their studies, of colleges that closed and of young athletes who missed great opportunities.

But what is YOUR story? What was it like to live in Piermont in 2020?

The Piermont Historical Society would like to capture what it meant for you and your family to be a members of our com-

munity in 2020. We are asking that you take the time to fill out a survey that will reflect what YOU felt, what YOU did, what

was overwhelming and what was simply wonderful. On January 1, 2030, the Capsule will be opened and shared.

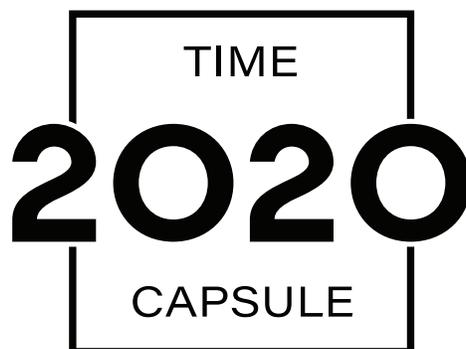
Everyday we feel the immensity of this time through the press, social media, and even by looking out the window and seeing people with masks. What will we be thinking about this time when we look back in ten years time?

Please help us to create a meaningful remembrance of this Historical time. One that is told by those who lived it, in our

community, every day.

The Piermont 2020 Time Capsule will be available for your input starting in October via Facebook and other outlets.

—*Barbara Scheulen*



Mapping Piermont's Future

Piermonters know that the flooding news for our village isn't good. Rather than ignoring the issue or resorting to wishful thinking, Piermonters can squarely face flood risk concerns with a number of new mapping tools.

Up until now, residents looking for flooding data relied mostly on FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Authority) flood maps. But those maps are based on historical data and don't factor in the effects of climate change such as more intense weather and rising sea levels. In September, NYS DEC will make available a flood mapping tool derived from the Sheng Study (see page 9), that will enable Piermonters to better understand the projected physical and economic impacts of future storms and sea-level rise. The PWRC will be scheduling online workshops to train residents how to navigate and use this important new data.

This fall the Village plans to pass legislation that will require flood data be part of the site plan approval process for all properties in designated flood zones, according to Trustee Nate Mitchell. Applicants for a building permit will go through the PWRC who will provide flood mapping information that will travel with the application and be reviewed by our land use boards.

One useful source of flood maps and data already available is Floodfactor.com. Here Piermonters can find historical flood data as well as flood projection information. Most importantly, residents can locate their individual property's data and learn how flooding will affect them directly. The organization behind this webtool, First Street Foundation, describes the need for expanded flooding information:

"Although useful for some purposes, FEMA flood maps left individual homeowners wondering how flood risk impacts them directly. Finding a home's flood history was also difficult, as flood disclosure laws vary by state, and individual flood insurance claims are protected by privacy laws. All the while, environmental changes like higher sea levels and more intense rainstorms, driven by warming sea surface and atmospheric temperatures, have been increasing flood risks for millions of homes across the country."

According to Floodfactor's analysis FEMA identified 8.7 million properties at risk, but 14.6 million properties are actually at risk. Floodfactor calculates any location's probability of flooding from the four major flood types: rain, riverine, tidal events, and storm surge. Piermont has seen it all.

Superstorm Sandy's (2012) flooding arrived by river. In Hurricane Floyd (1999) with its 12" of rainfall, the village was inundated with inland and hillside flash flooding. Irene (2011) saw a combination of riverine and hill-

side flooding. Hillside flooding came from four locations. One was on south Piermont Avenue, where steep slopes drained the flooded wetlands and ponds of the Cowboy Fields above. Three uphill runoffs from Rte. 9W and the Erie path poured onto Hudson Terrace and down St. John's Stream at the northern border of the village, resulting in mudslides down to Piermont Avenue. There is good news for folks who live in those flash flood areas, particularly along the Erie Path: Piermont has acquired its own machinery for clearing storm drains (previously borrowed from the County) - essential flood-control equipment that is now always at the ready.

Good news may also be on the way for residents struggling with the rising cost of flood insurance. The Village has hired Tetra-Tech, the engineering firm that wrote the Rockland County hazard mitigation plan, to complete the Village's application to be part of FEMA's Community Ranking System. This voluntary program recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed its minimum program requirements - to reduce flood damage to insurable property, strengthen and support the insurance aspects of the National Flood Insurance Program, and encourage a comprehensive approach to floodplain management. FEMA awards those communities with discounted flood insurance premium rates. Trustee Mitchell, who heads up the PWRC, has surveyed and prepared detailed information for all the properties in Piermont's flood zones, and that information will create the backbone of Piermont's CRS application. —Margaret Grace



"Silver Sticks" Photo by Kate Buggeln

Photographer Captures Piermont's Natural Beauty and Industrial Past

Editor's Note: Piermont's social media sites, Piermont Happenings and Piermont NY Community Page, have long been a source of wonderful local photography. This past year has seen a burst of gifted new contributors adding to the talented mix. The Piermont Newsletter looks forward to presenting these artists to their admiring community in this and our coming issues.

Forty-five minutes before sunrise, Kate Buggeln has already left her Piermont residence to explore the village with her camera. "The light is extraordinary at this time of day", says Kate. "Sunrise is my favorite time to take photographs."

A self-taught photographer with only a few years experience behind the lens, Kate is nevertheless creating breathtaking images of Piermont on an almost daily basis featured in Piermont's Community Facebook page, her Instagram account ([Instagram.com/katebuggeln](https://www.instagram.com/katebuggeln)) and website [<https://katebuggelnphotography.com>] and soon to be shown at the Piermont Flywheel Gallery, which recently accepted her as a member.

"I worked with many photographers throughout my marketing career and in my volunteer work in Rwanda and Afghanistan, but I never actually picked up photography myself," she explained. "Then, several years ago, I began a year-long journey on Instagram [an online photo sharing site]. I was looking at the world each day for something that made me feel happy or grateful. At the beginning of the year, I posted my own photos as well as the photos of others; by the end of the year I was using all of my own work." What began for Kate as an act of daily gratitude became something she wanted to seriously pursue.

Kate and her husband Steve Kuloits lived in other Rockland County



Mystery Road. Photo by Kate Buggeln



Self-portrait. Photo by Kate Buggeln

river towns over the years, but she was always been attracted to Piermont. About four years ago they had the opportunity to purchase a home in the village. "There is something truly unique about Piermont. The village has a special DNA to it. In Piermont, you are never truly in nature or in its industrial past. Rather you are somewhere in between -- it is this tension that is such a source of inspiration for me."

What does Kate look for when taking photographs? "I look for multi-dimensional light, geometric structure and some element of drama: drama in the form of almost anything, but in my photos it is often birdlife or celestial" Kate said. "I have no idea if that's what I would have learned in [photography] school, but it's where my instincts and good luck take me."

Kate is happy for the response she has received to her and other photographers images posted on the Piermont NY Community Facebook page. "So many local photographers are posting now, and in response residents often share stories of their Piermont childhoods. Each time I learn something new about my adopted hometown". She is also happy to be a member of the Piermont Flywheel Gallery: "Every woman in my family is some sort of artist" she noted. "I was the only one who did not have a creative outlet. So I am grateful to finally be in an artist community and holding up the family tradition."—Ron Derven

Piermont Votes

In the 2016 Presidential election, 1386 Piermonters cast their ballots. 918 voted for Clinton, 399 voted for Trump, 28 voted for Gary Johnson, 14 voted for Jill Stein, 18 wrote in a candidate for President, 5 did not vote for any Presidential candidate, and 3 "over" voted (voted for more than one candidate, so the ballot was disqualified).

In 2008, 1387 Piermonters voted in the Presidential Election—the largest number of votes cast in a single election in Piermont up until that time. The tally was Obama 944 to

McCain 417. 2008 remains the record year for voter turnout in Piermont.

Going into this 2020 Presidential Election, Piermont has 1,848 registered voters, with Democrats in the majority with 1015 registered voters, followed by 403 Piermont voters that are not affiliated with a Party (NoParty), and 334 Republicans. The Independence Party has 70 registered voters, and the remaining 26 registered Piermont voters are divided among 6 other parties —Margaret Grace

Piermont Provides - A Food Pantry

Every Sunday at the Piermont Farmers Market in Parelli Park, a donation table for those lacking food has become a staple manned by volunteers from Piermont.

The recent power outage caused from Storm Isaias wiped out many villagers' refrigerated groceries. In addition to the financial instability from the pandemic, some wondered how they were going to afford replenishing them.

In less than a day, Trustee Nathan Mitchell and Joe Serra of the Piermont Farmer's Market got the food pantry started. Utilizing help from N2N and the Piermont Civic Association, and beginning with a few signs and a lot of social media postings, word got out where one could make donations and those in need discreetly pick up the donated food. Joe Serra and Bill Walsh generously hold the food pantry pick up 'under the white canopy' on their property at OUTSIDE IN Gallery in Piermont during week days. Donations are continuously dropped off there as well. A big shout out to Canzonas, the Community Market and Farmers Market vendors for their generosity! Originally the food pantry was for residents only, but because the need was strong in surrounding towns as well, it remains open to all.

"The hope for the food pantry is that it provides a frame-



Joe Serra and Trustee Nate Mitchell at the Piermont Provides Food Bank table at the Farmers Market. Photo by Lori Lowell

work that supports making connections between those of us who can spare a little with those of us who could use a little help from our community" Nathan Mitchell said.

People often ask how long will the food pantry continue? With the uncertainty we are seeing in our economy, there may be an increasing demand for this kind of relief. The answer, until the need trickles down to nothing. —Joanne Ottaviano



Piermont Black Lives Matter Gathering, June 10, 2020. Photo collage by Kate Buggeln

FOOD PANTRY PICK UP

OUTSIDE IN

249 Ferdon Avenue, Piermont
(under the white canopy)

Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm

FOOD DROP OFF, CASH DONATIONS

PIERMONT FARMERS MARKET

Parelli Park, Piermont
(Food Pantry table)

Sunday 10am to 3pm

Breaking News! The Library has re-opened!

While we will have limited services, a few less hours, and some restrictions, we are so excited to see you again!

Mon., Wed., Fri.: 10:00am - 4:00pm

Tues. & Thurs.: 12:00pm - 7:00pm

Sat. & Sun.: CLOSED

Updated information is on our website
www.piermontlibrary.org.



From The Library

Curbside pick-up is fully up and running at the Piermont Library! Visit our website at www.piermontlibrary.org to search for items from all the libraries on our route. Then book a time slot for safe and easy contactless curbside pick-up. All books are quarantined before pick-up for your safety. If you need assistance, call us at 845-359-4595 or email us at info@piermontlibrary.org. We are getting new materials again too! If you are new to Piermont or need a library card, please reach out. We would love to welcome you to the library.

Even during these complex times, there is still so much going on through Piermont Library- to stay up on the latest, make sure you are receiving our emails- write to us at info@piermontlibrary.org if you are not on our email list. Our website (www.piermontlibrary.org) always has a full list of events on our calendar page. Additionally, you can look for us on Facebook (Dennis P. McHugh Piermont Public Library), Twitter (@mchughpmtlib), and Instagram (mchugh_piermont_library).

The Mighty Five Libraries in our school district are joining together for two special events for fall. There will be an animal program, Eyes of the Wild, on Saturday October 3rd and a scavenger hunt in September. Details coming soon.

We are beginning to have Virtual Art Exhibitions through our website. For September and October, we will feature local photographer Michael Garber. Garber, a landscape, nature and portrait photographer, is intrigued by the subjectivity of light and is drawn to objects as they are transformed in changing light. He employs light as a design element in shaping and capturing his images. Dramatic scenes attract his attention especially where color and texture add depth and intensity. He has a special affinity for clouds with their visual power. He has traveled extensively to photograph diverse landscapes in their unique light.

New offerings from our popular art classes with Alexis Starke will begin this fall virtually with all new live video classes via Google Meet. For kids, we will be offering a series of STEAM themed art classes taking inspiration from science, technology, engineering, and math. These classes are designed to explore and enhance creative thinking, problem solving, and self-expression in a relaxed and inspiring atmosphere. For adults, our popular Create and Sip events are continuing virtually with monthly classes that explore inspiring artists and include goody bags with wine and chocolates. Join us! We also have daytime art and craft classes for adults. Finally, we will be planning

some family art classes for fall. For more information visit our website or contact Alexis Starke at astarke@piermontlibrary.org.

Our Adult Book Discussion Group will be reading *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett this fall, with a book discussion on Wednesday, October 21st at 3:30pm. Check our website for any updated information.

On Sunday, September 29th at 7pm, we are pleased to present an online performance by Mark Frankel of the legendary Blue Man Group. Mark, a 15 year veteran of the group, will be sharing of stories, techniques, and experiences with the "ask me anything" openness that is a feature of this talk. Register for this event at our events page at www.piermontlibrary.org.

In collaboration with the Piermont Historical Society, we are pleased to announce the virtual screenings of two documentaries in the fall.

On September 22nd, 4pm: *Piermont's Papermill: Stories from the Factory*. Before the condominiums, Piermont's Pier was home to a paper mill that dominated the village landscape for over eight decades. The factory had a major impact on the village and its residents for generations. Narrated by Grammy award winner Tom Chapin, this documentary features interviews from factory workers, stories from residents who grew up in the shadow of the papermill and rare photos of the inside of the factory.

On October 13th, 4pm: *Last Stop USA: Piermont During WWII*. This film won the People's Choice Award at the 2016 Nyack film festival. The documentary explores the role of Piermont during World War II. Nicknamed Last Stop USA, the pier was the last place over a million service men and women touched American soil before heading off to war. Narrated by Piermont's Tom Chapin, we hear from residents about life in Piermont before, during and after the second world war.

After each screening, members of the Piermont Historical Society will be on hand for a short questions and answer session. Details and registration information will be on our website soon.

Through our website, you can download ebooks and comics, emagazines, and digital audiobooks from Overdrive or Hoopla Digital; download up to 5 songs per week and stream up to 3 hours per day with Freegal Music, and borrow music with Hoopla Digital; and stream movies and television shows from Hoopla Digital or Overdrive.

—The staff of the Piermont Public Library

Piermont Marsh Update – DEC’s July 2020 Online Seminar

On July 16, the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve (HRNERR) presented the findings of the three-year study by Dr. Peter Sheng on “Piermont Marsh’s Role in Buffering the Village from Storms” and provided an update on DEC’s plans for the Piermont Marsh.

The current (2017) Draft Marsh Management Plan called for the eradication of 40 acres of Phragmites over 10 years in three phases of 10 acres each, to be replaced by DEC’s favored “native” grasses. Piermont residents responded both at meetings and in written comments that Phragmites was an essential natural barrier during storms. In response, HRNERR decided to create a research question in collaboration with the Village, which led to the study by Dr. Sheng and associates.

Dr. Sheng’s Study

Dr. Sheng and his team did a forensic study on the role of the Marsh in protecting the Village both during Hurricane Sandy, with an evaluation of the economic benefits resulting from this protection and some predictions into the future. Dr. Sheng stated that the Marsh is presently composed of 92% Phragmites, with the rest consisting of “native” grasses (primarily Typha and Spartina). On a typical day, the Marsh is 12 feet tall, and the high point of the storm tide during Sandy was 9.5 feet. Yes, the study showed, the Marsh played a significant role in dissipating wave energy and blocking the flow of debris, avoiding more than an estimated \$900,000. In property damage and loss.

Dr. Sheng’s group looked at the following question: what if Phragmites had been replaced by “native plants” and specifically Typha (Cattail) at full density on 40 acres, as proposed

under the 2017 Draft Management Plan? Typha shows far more seasonal variation than Phragmites, unlike Phragmites, which maintains its height and density year-round, Typha is shorter and sparser in the spring. If Typha had reached its full height and density at the time of a storm such as Sandy, there would have been little difference in buffering capacity, the study showed. What would have happened if the storm had occurred in the spring, or if the marsh was cleared for re-planting – a concern raised by residents at various public hearings. This timeline was not part of the study.

Dr. Sheng added that by 2100 the Marsh will likely be overwhelmed by Sea Level Rise (“SLR”). In summary, the research showed that the Marsh significantly reduced the damage from the Sandy storm surge on adjacent properties, and will do so in the future, but we may lose that protection due to SLR.

The study helped create a web tool that will be helpful to property owners who wish to get some sense of the risk their property faces from SLR as time goes on. This web tool will be available in the fall, and members of the PWRC (Piermont Waterfront Resiliency Committee) will be available to train property owners on its use.

DEC’s Plans

HRNERR Manager Heather Gierloff and Research Coordinator Sarah Fernald spoke about the present state of the Marsh and the DEC’s plans. DEC is somewhat concerned about pools in the center of the Marsh and about erosion at the Marsh’s edges. They are measuring elevations. We have lost about 50 feet of Marsh edge in some areas in the last 100 years, but this is a “not unreasonable” rate of erosion.

At the moment, the Piermont Marsh Management Plan is on hold. A new draft should be presented to the public in 2021. For the time being, DEC is not using chemicals. They are installing 9300 square feet (less than ¼ acre) of sun-blocking geotextile and monitoring three plots to see how well this works. The geotextile will be removed in two years. The goal is to maintain a small area of “native plants” in the center of the Marsh. When asked whether HRNERR would completely rule out the use of herbicide, Heather Gierloff stated that, although any plans to use herbicide are “on pause” for now and 40 acres is no longer under consideration, herbicide “remains in the toolbox.”

To summarize, the Piermont Marsh Management Plan will be rewritten and presented in 2021. The new plan will most likely involve a considerably smaller area than the 40 acres proposed in 2017. For the time being, HRNERR is experimenting with geotextile, measuring elevations, and looking at the issue of shoreline erosion. They may develop some projects to address the latter issue.

A recording and summary of the webinar will be available by October 1. —*Marthe Schulwolf*



Algelique Ilo and Kevin Kilner pull water chestnuts from Sparkill Pond with Sparkill Creek Watershed Alliance in July. Staff photo

Front Line Report

During this time of pandemic, an ongoing assignment for Piermont's police officers has been to remind residents and visitors alike to wear masks when out in public and to safely socially distance (keep six feet apart), according to Chief James Hurley. A perennial issue in the village is the number of bicyclists coming in and through the its streets. Chief Hurley said that he has had to assign an additional officer to help control bicyclists. "We are again having to remind bicyclists to ride single file through the village. When they are not riding their bikes, they are being told to wear masks," he said.

Although Piermont has thankfully not experienced an increase in larcenies during this time of pandemic, there is an increase in larcenies in Rockland County overall, according to the chief. Therefore, he said that all residents are urged to lock their valuables that are in their cars and homes. He

offered a great security suggestion—a "9 pm Check." "At 9 pm each evening, make sure your car keys are out of the car and that the car is locked. At that time, check to ensure that your house is locked up as well," he urged.

The Department of Public Works will end its biweekly pickup of rubbish and debris on October 14th, a Wednesday. Fall leaf pickup will run from October through December once again this year. Loose leaves should be placed at the property edge. Do not block sidewalks with leaves or rack them into the road. When piling the leaves at property's edge, make sure there is no brush, rocks, sticks or debris in the pile. If you plan to dispose of leaves by bagging them, use biodegradable bags, which can be picked up at the DPW garage, 359-1717, during normal work hours free of charge to all village residents. Leaves that are placed in plastic bags will not be picked up.

If you have rubbish and debris

that you need to dispose of between November and March, call the DPW. Rubbish and debris will be picked up by appointment only during those months. Household hazardous waste (paints, chemicals, e-waste, etc.) should be brought to the Rockland County Hazardous Waste Facility, Pomona, New York. You may contact the Hazardous Waste facility by calling the hotline (845) 364-2444. While Covid-19 continues to impact Piermont and indeed the whole nation, the Piermont Fire Department stands ready to help residents, as it has throughout the pandemic. Donate to the department and, if you can, join the fire department or the ambulance service. Due to social distancing rules, rather than go to the department on a Monday night, which is the time that the department generally holds its regular meetings, call the department at 359-1208 to volunteer or to donate.

—Ron Derven



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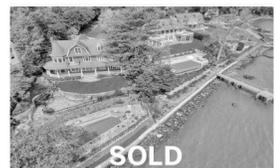
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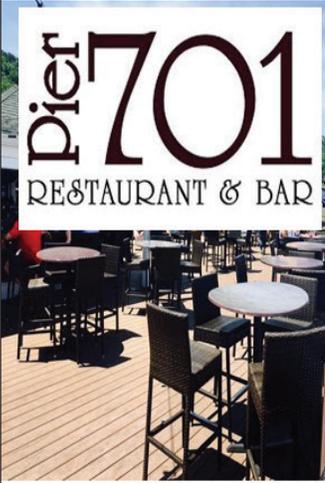


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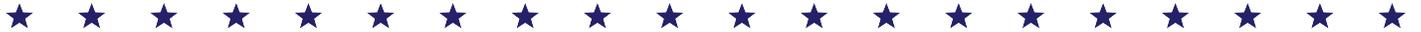
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EARLY VOTING IN PERSON: There will be nine days of early voting. You can vote at any of Rockland’s four Early Voting Centers – the closest Early Voting Center to Piermont is Orangetown Town Hall, 26 West Orangeburg Road, Orangeburg, New York, 10962.

Early voting hours are:

- Saturday, October 24, 2020 from 9AM until 2PM
- Sunday, October 25, 2020 from 9AM until 2PM
- Monday, October 26, 2020 from 9AM until 5PM
- Tuesday, October 27, 2020 from 12 Noon until 8PM
- Wednesday, October 28, 2020 from 9AM until 5PM
- Thursday, October 29, 2020 from 12 Noon until 8PM
- Friday, October 30, 2020 from 9AM until 5PM
- Saturday, October 31, 2020 from 9AM until 2PM
- Sunday, November 1, 2020 from 9AM until 2PM

VOTE BY MAIL WITH AN ABSENTEE BALLOT: The deadline to apply to receive a ballot by is October 27, 2020. You can call, write or email the Board of Elections to have a ballot sent to you. When you receive your ballot, carefully follow the instructions, and return the ballot in the envelope provided no later than Nov. 3rd. (Note: you can legally check the box “temporary illness” during the this time of pandemic.) It is recommended that you fill out and return your ballot well in advance due to the expected high volume of mail-in ballots. You can also drop off your absentee ballot rather than mailing it, as well as vote at the Rockland County Board of Elections in New City during regular business hours or during their absentee extended hours.

VOTE IN PERSON ON ELECTION DAY, NOVEMBER 3rd: If you are a Piermont voter, you will vote at St. John’s Church, 895 Piermont Avenue. Polls will be open from 6am until 9pm.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: CALL THE ROCKLAND COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS 845-638-5172. EMAIL: VOTERINFO@CO.ROCKLAND.NY.US

