

PIERMONT NEWSLETTER

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MAYOR NAMES PLANNING BOARD

An official planning board of seven citizens has been appointed by Mayor Americo DiFrancesca to draw up the Master Plan for Piermont's development through the decade of the 70s.

The five men and two women, a representative cross-section of the village's 2,200 population, have been directed to study Piermont's present problems and future potential and to prepare a grand pattern of the desired shape of things to come. After a thorough study they will submit a proposed Master Plan to the Village Trustees who will then hold public hearings before taking action.

The members of the newly constituted Village Planning Board are:

MRS. ELOISE BIZZARRI of 830 River Road, wife of Dr. William Bizzarri, the dentist. Mrs. Bizzarri, besides being a housewife, is skilled in interior design and knowledgeable in building restoration. Her expressed philosophy: "Restoration first--demolition only as a last resort."

ROBERT M. BRADBURY of 873 River Road, an architect widely known for his good building designs and overall planning.

RICHARD BRUNO of 45 Upper Ritie Street, an experienced builder and head of his own contracting firm.

SAL CONIGLIARO of 492 Main Street, senior citizen, proprietor of Piermont's tailor shop, active in Rotary Club and civic projects. He says: "Something must be done if the village is to survive."

JAMES FRANCIS of Ash Street, a construction worker, familiar with building types, requirements and materials. A member of the black community, Mr. Francis has a special understanding of its problems and ideas for a better Piermont.

KURT GERHARDT of Ferdon Avenue, a business leader and energetic advocate of revitalization of Piermont's Main Street business section. Long the operator of Kurt's Service Station, he is now a salesman of automotive supplies.

KATHRYN SMITH of Paradise Avenue, a career business woman, active in civic projects including the Thrift Shop, who has a reputation for getting things done.

Mayor DiFrancesca appointed also two special advisers, whose expertise will be available to the Village Planning Board. They are William Yuda, the Piermont village engineer, and Milton Immerman, engineer and designer. Mr. Yuda, whose home is in Palisades, heads the professional engineering firm of William A. Yuda Associates of West Nyack. Mr. Immerman, whose home is on River Road, is president of Walter Dorwin Teague Associates, designers of the new Boeing 747 superjet, Thayer Hall at West Point, the U.S. Air Force Academy. Closer to home, Mr. Immerman designed the Piermont War Memorial.

Mayor DiFrancesca described the concept of a master plan as "a guide for the potential development of a community for the better life of its people." Declaring that it was not intended to be an exact blueprint of all projects and improvements in the decade ahead, Mr. DiFrancesca said:

"The aim will be to envision population and traffic trends, housing, business and recreational needs and other foreseeable situations in the years ahead and to lay out guidelines for highway and street improvements, bus transportation, land use, parks and waterfront development, pollution and noise abatement, garbage disposal, new housing, jobs and business opportunities. These must all be correlated in an overall pattern for better living. But the Master Plan must be flexible enough to allow for changing conditions and new ideas for meeting them advantageously."

One major advantage of a Master Plan, the Mayor said, is its protection against the type of haphazard and often unplanned growth that has plagued villages, cities and metropolitan regions across the nation.

For the first time in the more than 120 years that Piermont has been a village, all proposed developments, improvements and projects will have to be approved by the Village Planning Board as not being violative of the Master Plan.

Communities from coast to coast have been adopting master plans during recent years. For one thing, no community can qualify for Federal or State money to urban renewal unless it first submits an acceptable master plan. The Mayor and trustees are studying comments, suggestions and questions of Piermonters about the possibility of an urban renewal project for the Main Street and waterfront area which was outlined in general and tentative terms at an open meeting in the Village Hall in October.

Pending completion of the interviews and soundings of citizen opinion, village officials have made no commitments on urban renewal at present. Mayor DiFrancesca said that the creation of a Village Planning Board and drawing up of a Master Plan were necessary for Piermont's future, with or without urban renewal.

DUMPING ON PIERMONT PIER TO END SOON

As part of a corporate-wide campaign to improve and clean up the environment around its plants, Continental Can Corporation has ordered its Piermont Division to stop all dumping on its property. The ban, to be effective this month as soon as alternatives are worked out, includes the use of the disposal area by the Village. The Village Board of Trustees has been holding a series of meetings with contractors and disposal equipment manufacturers to work out a new way to handle the trash and garbage problem.

Getting rid of Piermont's garbage and wastes will not be a simple matter for either the Village or the can company, and it is certain to be costly for both. The Board, at press time, had half a dozen or more alternatives under study. These include hiring outside contractors, installing compacting equipment or establishing trenching and landfill operations.

For years, the Board has realized that the use of the pier for dumping could not continue indefinitely, but Continental Can's immediate deadline came as a surprise. The Village may have to work out a temporary trash and garbage disposal method.

Whatever method the Board selects, it will be more costly for the Village than the simple dumping arrangement it has had for years. Industrial waste from the paper and box factories accounted for 80% or 90% of the material disposed of in the dump; the new corporate ruling is going to be even more costly to Continental Can than it is to the Village. The Board and Continental Can representatives are investigating cooperative arrangements.

The end of dumping on the Pier will eliminate one of the most objectionable eyesores on the Tappan Zee, and a source of air and water pollution that has concerned many residents and conservationists alike. The move, coupled with the new underwater sewer outfall, cannot help but benefit the whole area.

DOWN ZONING PETITION HEARD

Piermonters turned out in strength at a public hearing of the Village Board on January 19 to oppose the building of additional garden apartments just north of the Lawrence Park and Roundtree developments.

Following presentation of the many reasons opposing further commercialization of the wooded tracts along Route 9-W, it is now expected that the Board will reject on March 12 the petition of two owners of a six-acre tract to downgrade the present zoning of one-acre plots for individual residences.

Rejection of the petition will mean that Piermont has successfully turned back the first attempt to whittle down the protective zoning which the Board adopted in 1968 after two years of study.

After two lawyers had argued in favor of the downgrading and 18 property owners and other citizens had stated their objections, the hearing was adjourned to the March date. This will permit the County Planning Board to file the recommendation required by law. The recommendation is advisory and is not binding on the Village.

The hearing was attended by 50 villagers who applauded points made by those opposing a zone change.

The petitioners for the downgrading were Quentin Gilbert and Sylvia Rosenblum, who own a tract between Castle Road and Highland Road. Their attorney, Aaron Windheim of Nyack, said that the owners, who had inherited the property, wanted to be able to sell it to developers who would be free to build apartments.

Another lawyer, Anthony Zakarakis, appearing in behalf of Warren and Irene Hamilton, owners of nearby property on the east side of 9-W, supported the petition and said his clients wanted also to be able to sell to possible developers of apartments. The main argument of the two lawyers was that the more than 200 apartment units in the Lawrence Park and Roundtree developments had already changed the character of the neighborhood and made it less desirable for individual homes on tracts of one acre and larger.

This argument led several of the opponents to declare that, by the same token, the construction of multi-family developments on the applicants' properties would in turn make the adjacent properties unsuitable for continued individual home use and would set off a chain reaction of apartments advancing northward along both sides of 9-W and destroying the rural charm of the southern tip of Rockland County.

Gerald Ikelheimer, owner of the Castle and the 19-acre estate on which it is situated, and James Hammerstein, owner of six adjacent acres, both opposed any downgrading of the zoning, warning that if apartments were permitted near their homes they, too, would petition for downzoning of their property, sell, and move out. Koren DerHarootian, the sculptor, and Edward McPherson, who both have homes in that area, said further apartment encroachment would force them also to sell and move.

Mr. Hammerstein, President of the Piermont Civic Association, said that none of the petitioners lived in Piermont. Describing them as "absentee landlords" he said they could not plead hardship in seeking the zone change. He said the Gilbert-Rosenblum

tract had been bought in the 1950s for \$25,000 and the owners had recently turned down an \$80,000 offer in the hope of a bigger profit from its sale for apartment development.

Opposition to the proposed downgrading came not only from property owners in the immediate vicinity but from persons in others parts of the village who said the riverfront and mountainside beauty of Piermont should be jealously guarded against land speculators and apartment developers. Donald Blauhut, of Piermont Place, said the former Wentworth property was at the approach to Clausland Mountain which "we all fought to preserve." He added: "We're talking about not just one parcel, but the whole mountainside."

Of 19 villagers who were heard, 18 said they were against any weakening of the zoning ordinance. Kenneth Clements, an industrial designer, told the board: "By downzoning this first parcel you would, in effect, be downzoning the whole village in esthetics."

Carl Codello, a senior citizen, said he might favor a change if it were for putting up apartments for the elderly. Mayor DiFrancesca pointed out that there was no application for any particular type of apartment before the board, just the question of whether to downgrade to permit apartments.

Robert Bradbury, an architect and former president of the Piermont Civic Association, reminded the Board that when objections had been raised against permitting development of the Roundtree apartments, Village officials had said they had decided that a limited number of apartments might broaden the tax base but had indicated that the limit had been reached.

Oliver Moore III, environment editor of Time magazine, said a study in the village of Trenton in Maine had shown that apartments sometimes result in higher costs to taxpayers because of the cost of utilities, police and other services and the increase in the number of school children.

In answer to a question why the Board was even considering an application that would permit more apartments, Trustee Dale Hiestand said the law mandated a hearing on any application for a zone change.

PIERMONT DEMOCRATIC CLUB MEETS

The Piermont Democratic Club, at its regular January meeting, elected new officers, endorsed the incumbents running for reelection to the Village Board in March, and gave Robert Meehan his first club endorsement in his race for the office of State Attorney General.

The list of new officers shows the results of a membership drive in November during which all registered Democrats in the village were sent invitations to join. The vice president and secretary are new members. The officers are John Hickey, president; Bob Bradbury, vice president; Grace Radin, secretary and Valerie Peterson, treasurer.

The village trustees up for reelection in March are Albert Lowry and George Hickey, regular two year terms, and Dale Hiestand, seeking the one year unexpired term of William Lynch, to which he was appointed last year when Mr. Lynch resigned. The club's endorsement took the form of a recommendation to the Piermont Democratic Committee, which makes the official designation of party candidates. That Committee is made up of Mrs. Barnes, Mrs. Yancy, Mr. Brauner and Mr. Rankin from District #33, and Mrs. Hardy, Mrs. Lowry, Mr. Sorriente and Mrs. Ann Hickey, chairman, from District #1.

Mr. Meehan's appearance as guest speaker came only a few hours before his official announcement as a candidate for State Attorney General at the Overseas Press Club the next day.

VOTER REGISTRATION will be held at the Village Hall, Saturday, February 28 from 12 to 9 PM. This does not apply to residents who already have permanent registration. The Village election will be held on Tuesday, March 17 from 12 to 9 PM.

CARD PARTY - Village Hall, Piermont Democratic Club Benefit. Friday, February 27, 8:30 PM.

DALE HIESTAND NAMED TO VILLAGE BOARD

Dale Hiestand is a professor who has never put his foot into an ivory tower.

At Columbia University's Graduate School of Business he is Associate Professor of Economics and Senior Research Associate in the Conservation of Human Resources program.

In Piermont he was appointed to the Village Board last year and will stand for election to complete the one year term of office on March 17.

As a Board member he is putting his knowledge and experience with government agencies, finance and accounting to work -- helping to carry out the necessary business of the Village.

"One of my functions on the Board," Mr. Hiestand said, "is with the use of tax money and investment of Village funds." He

pointed out that through his work at Columbia, he has a lot of contacts with federal and state government agencies.

As Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors (a group of economists and businessmen appointed by the former five-man Board of Supervisors to study Rockland County's financial situation), Hiestand recently published a report assessing the county's future economic situation, pointing out possible solutions.

Hiestand's involvement with Rockland County didn't begin eight years ago when he and his wife, Wanda and their children, Greg and Susan, moved into their Hudson Terrace House.

The family first lived in Shanks Village from 1949 to 1954 -- like many other World War II veterans and their families, completing their education at Columbia and at the same time building up a new nucleus of Rockland County Partisans.

At Shanks Hiestand was a Democratic Party committeeman.

In Piermont he has served as the Piermont Civic Association Liaison to the Village Board for two years and as PCA President for the year 1968-69.

He is particularly interested in the establishment of an active youth center and is pleased that the Teen Center now operating at the old Sparkill School annex is in good shape.

But primarily he feels his contribution to the village is his ability to make efficient and businesslike decisions -- using all his background in economics and business practice.

Why would a professor who studies and teaches business theory during the day, choose to come home and practice it?

To Hiestand the answer is simple. "I like this Village -- and the people in it. I think it is an honor to serve," he said, "and besides, I get a big kick out of it."

TEEN CENTER GETS DIRECTOR

David "Fritz" Knox has been named permanent director of the Piermont Teen Center.

A 26 year-old native of Aliquippa, Pennsylvania and currently a South Nyack resident, Knox has a degree in Education from the Nyack Missionary College and works as a research attendant at Rockland State Hospital.

At the Teen Center his duties so far have been to supervise the basketball and pool games popular with the regular partici-

pants at the center and to police the rough-and-tumble which occasionally breaks out.

But Knox has more plans for the future including films, dances and trips. In the works is a showing of the New York Mets film, "Look Who's Number One," which won rave reviews wherever it has been shown.

Students from St. Thomas Aquinas College have offered to tutor at the Center. Forms to sign up for this program have been distributed, and any teen who requests tutoring will be matched up with a STAC volunteer. Volunteers and teens requesting their help will set up their own schedules for tutoring sessions in the center.

Because 90% of the 30 to 40 regular patrons are boys, the Teen Center Staff is making special efforts to attract more girls there and even up the ratio. One of the former classrooms will be decorated and furnished as a lounge and several women have volunteered to supervise more "girl-centered" activities there.

Volunteers are urgently needed; one of the Center's main problems is lack of adult volunteers. Frequently, adults who have been corraled as chaperones beg off or fail to show up at all. Thanks to the efforts of those who do come, particularly those who, like Jack Parker, Len Hunt, Ernest Tebo, and George Johnson, take a regular assignment every week or two, the center has remained open most of its schedule. More help is needed, particularly when the expanded activities begin.

There have been some changes in the composition of the Adult Advisory Committee. Brian Holihan was elected chairman to replace Ernest Tebo, who resigned the post (although remaining on the committee) because of the increased demands on his time by the new program at the Tappan Zee Elementary School. New Village Board member, Dale Hiestand, moved over to be Board representative on the committee and Jim Alise replaced him as treasurer. New committee members are Nan Hennion and Len Hunt.

Yellow membership cards have gone out to center members and there will be spot checks made to insure that only those eligible will use the center.

Any 13 to 18 year old resident of Piermont, Sparkill and Grandview is eligible and may obtain the card by asking for an application any night at the center.

LOBSTERS AND TURKEY, AND HAM AND CORNED BEEF; GREEN SALAD,



Waiting for the buffet ...



The lobster looks good ...



So does everything else!



President Jim Hammsterstein
conducts the brief meeting.

BEAN SALAD, POTATO SALAD --- AND A DASH OF SPEECHES!

When does an event become a tradition? The fourth annual PCA Dinner stepped out from its past. Instead of holding it the first week in December (as in past years) dinner planners moved it into the new year.

On January 27th Cornetta's -- as in the past -- hosted the get-together. The buffet was as lavish as ever. And 75 Pier-monthers and their friends ate, drank and talked.

Is that any way to run a meeting? From the looks of things, you bet it is!



The DiFrancescas (Bo and Anne) and the Hammersteins (Jimmy and Millette) share a table and a joke.



A time to catch up with friends and neighbors.



Is this a payoff? Treasurer Jerry Ikelheimer, and his wife Charlene, examine the door prize they won.

VILLAGE CLERK'S POSITION -- FULL TIME JOB

Mary Hardy, former Piermont treasurer and recorder of vital statistics; will combine these duties with those of the Village Clerk --- into one, full-time position.

Mrs. Hardy will replace former Piermont Village Clerk, John Boyan, who has submitted his letter of resignation to the Piermont Village Board, effective February 15.

Full-time employment in New York City has cut into the time Mr. Boyan could give to the increasing demands of his duties as Village Clerk.

THE THOMAS SEDLACKS -- "SERVICE TO PIERMONT A CONTINUING TRADITION"

Like any long established village which lies within commuting distance of New York City, Piermont has two groups of citizens: those who commute and those whose jobs are either in the village or very nearby. Generally, the commuters tend to be more recent arrivals to Piermont and those who work nearby tend to have ties to the village which go back many years, sometimes generations. And to make one final generalization, the village government tends to be run by the older residents, with the newcomers showing an interest only when some issue touches them rather directly. Recent issues of the Newsletter have included biographical sketches of some of the newer arrivals to Piermont; in this issue we meet one of Piermont's older families.

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Sedlack Jr. were both born in Piermont and graduated from the old Tappan Zee High School on Piermont Avenue. They live in the 120 year old Leitner house on Ferdon Avenue, east of the Reformed Church. A quick outline of their family's past and present activities in municipal affairs reveals a long tradition of service to the community: Bud Sedlack's father, Thomas Sedlack, Sr. and Betty Sedlack's father, Joseph Cassidy, served together as trustees on the Piermont Board; Betty's sister Anne Di Francesca is the present mayor's wife, and her uncle, Leo Auryansen, served as village clerk for 18 years; George Hickey, currently a trustee, is Bud Sedlack's uncle. His father, who left the Board of Trustees because of poor health, served for many years as Chairman of the Piermont Democratic Club.

Bud is a former chief of the Piermont Fire Department, and is now Captain of the Ambulance Squad. During his tenure as Chief the underwater rescue unit was established. He is a very active layman in the Catholic Church and the Knights of Columbus.

Mrs. Sedlack has served for 18 years on a committee of four ladies who have the responsibility of answering telephone calls

for emergency ambulance service, a duty which covers all non-business hours; nights, week-ends and holidays.

With this background it is not too surprising to find that the Sedlack's 20 year old daughter Patricia devotes her time regularly to a program for eight year old girls at St. Dominic's orphanage in Blauvelt, and has been a councillor for the past three years in the summer youth program in Piermont. Her brother Sgt. Tom Sedlack III is in the Air Force, stationed at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota, where he was designated Airman of the Month last October, after two weeks of competition involving rigorous written and oral examinations.

The Sedlacks love Piermont, and like everyone who loves the village, newcomers and old families alike, they are interested and wary of everything that threatens change. In a recent interview Bud Sedlack reminisced about the long fight that was waged against the Tappan Zee Bridge.

"We fought the Thruway because we were convinced that the bridge would spoil the natural beauty of the river. After all, my father used to swim in Sparkill creek, so we've seen a lot of changes, and we thought the bridge would be a disaster. (Can you imagine swimming in Sparkill Creek today?) The bridge hasn't been so bad though, and the fight did a lot to unify the people around here."

With their house backed up to the Palisades Park, they are concerned with rumors of further encroachments by the Park Authority: one report is that they want to extend the park to Sparkill Creek, to establish a natural boundary line. "It seems unlikely, but look at the Rockland Country Club - they recently lost two holes of their golf course, condemned and taken over by the Park. It's hard for the public to separate rumor from real threats, but we have to keep alert and ready to act, if necessary."

At the conclusion of the interview, Mr. Sedlack was asked by the interviewer (a newcomer) about the feeling that after nearly four years of operation, the PCA still encountered considerable opposition among members of the Fire Department.

"Sure," he replied, "there's opposition in the Fire Department. I think it is definitely a minority of the members, however. And what opposition there is grows out of a feeling that there's something very special about Piermont that should not be changed, and I can't argue with that. I think we're all trying to do the same things for Piermont, we just don't realize it. When we do - and remember, some of the new people have just as many mistaken ideas as anyone in the Fire Department - when we realize that we want the same thing, there won't be any more 'opposition'."

EXCHANGE OF PRINCIPALS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

T. Darrell Drummond, the principal of the Lake Normandy School, Montgomery County, Maryland, recently exchanged posts with Ernest Tebo as part of the effort towards individualizing instruction now going on at the Tappan Zee Elementary School.

Drummond's school in Rockville, a suburb of Washington, D.C. has been rated among the ten best in the nation; credit for its success must go directly to Drummond and his absolute commitment to the uniqueness of every child's learning experience.

Because the basic idea behind the experiment at Tappan Zee is that every child is an individual who must be taught as an individual, the experience and techniques developed over the past five years at the Lake Normandy School are extremely valuable.

The exchange was also suggested by the Institute for Development of Educational Activities (IDEA) because the circumstances of the two schools are comparable. Lake Normandy draws from a similar population; has a similar pupil/teacher ratio; and its program is achieved without special funding or extra personnel.

In fact, they receive the lowest budget of all the schools in their district. Thus, it was felt that the techniques used to make Lake Normandy one of the best schools in the nation were not beyond the scope of a school like Tappan Zee because they are rooted in the philosophy and commitment of the principal and staff rather than in money and equipment.

"Every child is unique and every teacher had better remember that," says Drummond. "He is unique not only in the rate at which he learns but also in the techniques he uses to learn. Listening, reading, touching, making a thing work, all play a part in the learning process."

A teacher who presents material in one way must necessarily lose those students who respond to another."

How does a teacher reach each individual work pattern when she cannot possibly maintain a one-to-one relationship with each and every child? Drummond's answer is to set up a situation where each child learns without the direct instruction of the teacher.

Instead of the teacher directly feeding all the information to the class, she presents a basic skill or unit of information and then makes available in "resource centers" a widely varied set of learning experiences where each student can choose the technique and level of difficulty that suits him.

The teacher is free to guide and supervise the independent workers according to their separate needs. Each child soon learns to judge his own abilities and progress, and to choose those materials which will bring him real achievement. There is individual testing and frequent personal conferences between student and teacher. Self-evaluation plays an important part, as does the requirement that any judgement by teacher or student can be questioned and must be substantiated.

The criterion of success is an individual's own growth and progress; he is competing only against himself. Citing a number of studies of the dropout problem as evidence, Drummond claims that the expectation of failure in a student is the most important cause of actual failure. A child who has consistently failed and been told that he is a failure will never learn, no matter what the teacher does, and he will soon give up even trying. The experience of success is itself the greatest impetus to further success. Occasionally, the initial success will have to be "hoked up" but the child thus started soon begins to meet real success and he's on his way.

Drummond is aiming at the development of a self-aware, confident, competent, and independent individual who will adjust to and function well in any situation. To those who doubt his methods, he can point to the impressive records of his students on standard achievement tests, and to the fact that they adjust with far less trauma to the traditional junior high school than students from the other elementary schools in the district. Because they have learned how to learn by themselves, they can do well even in a learning situation that they may not like. He is convinced that given the realities of life today, those who can operate independently have the best chance for survival.

Mr. Tebo returned from his week as principal of the Lake Normandy School impressed with how the whole structure was set up to meet the needs of the students rather than of the system. In many other schools he has visited under the auspices of IDEA, the organizational set-up, while supposedly flexible, still seemed to be the most important part of the school's program. At Lake Normandy, organization is only a means to an end, he said, and it can vary considerably depending on the needs of the students.

There are single-classroom situations; a group composed of two fifth-grade classes in one; a fifth and sixth grade together; and several large, multi-grade clusters in open areas.

Whatever grouping is used, the school requires that at some time each day, each child must be read to aloud. Drummond believes that children must hear their language used correctly and with grace and style if they are to learn to use it well.

During his week at TZ, Drummond found the staff deeply committed to individualized learning and determined to succeed at it despite the tremendous effort required. Tappan Zee Elementary

School may well be on the way to becoming another of the best schools in the nation.

WILLIAM PIPER

Many in Piermont will miss the genial presence of William C. Piper, long-time resident and former member of the Village Board. At the Piermont Library, he is particularly remembered-- as sponsor, patron, friend.

His busy eyebrows and his twinkling eyes were a familiar sight to all the staff, who looked forward to his near-weekly arrival with a heavy armload of books to return. Yet many are not aware of how much the library owed to him, from as far back as the installation of the wall shelves in the rooms upstairs. Mr. Piper carpentered those himself.

As a Village Trustee, he brought about the library's first tax support. Until then, it had existed only on private contributions. In the years of the library's decline, when many people didn't know Piermont even had a library, and most of those who did never tried to use it or work for it, Mr. Piper still came every week to read and re-read the books, and, as last president of the otherwise defunct Piermont Improvement Association, he worked with Miss Dorothea Thompson to keep some kind of administration going.

When community interest did revive, Mr. Piper was there with enthusiasm to bridge the gap between administrations.

Now the library has many friends. But it will never have a truer one than William Piper.

-- Judy Miller

AT THE LIBRARY ---

New Look in the Children's Room

On these grey winter days, the children's room at the Library seems brighter and cozier than ever. An anonymous benefactor put in long hours scraping down the lovely old fireplace to its original wood, restoring the hearth, and painting the walls a warm cream color. With the addition of some plants and the children's art work which Miss Cherry, art teacher at the elementary school, sends over regularly, the room is very gay.

Stories and Films

Wednesday story hours and film programs continue to be very popular. Pre-schoolers meet at the Library at 10:30 AM and listen to stories in the children's room while their mothers browse and enjoy coffee upstairs.

On Wednesday afternoons at 4 the children from the elementary school meet for stories, folk-singing and movies. The movie schedules are sent home from school with the regular Friday bulletins from Mr. Tebo. Be sure to check your child's book bag! Schedules are also posted on the Library and Post Office bulletin boards for all library activities.

Friday Night Films

Phyllis Brunson has planned another series of Friday night films for adults and young adults only. The time is 8:30 PM, the place is the Library, and the showings are open to the public and free. This is the schedule:

<u>February 20</u>	David and Lisa
<u>April 24</u>	Yeats Country Country of the Mind 2 short films
<u>May 15</u>	Occurrence at Owl Creek 2 Men in a Wardrobe Little Island

Exhibit Gallery

The upstairs hall in the Library has become a real "Gallery" with shows changing monthly. Christmas season there was a delightful display from the newly opened Hudson House Guild, in Nyack; followed in January by an exhibit of children's projects backed up with Sally Savage's pictures taken at the Library Pet Show.

LOVE is the theme of February's display of old Valentines and other romantic artifacts gathered from the volunteer staff of the Library.

Shows scheduled to follow are:

<u>March</u>	Piermont in Photographs, Past and Present
<u>April</u>	Do-It-Yourself, Home Repairs and Improvements
<u>May</u>	Garden Month
<u>June</u>	Stichery -- work from the special classes at the elementary school.

All the displays are coordinated with books and records of special interest from the Library's collection, and in May there will also be a speaker on gardening -- time and exact topic to be announced.

Librarian Grace Meyers is planning to conduct several nature walks again this Spring, starting as soon as the weather permits. Keep checking the bulletin boards.

BOOK REVIEW

Robert H. Boyle: THE HUDSON RIVER

Unassuming as Robert Boyle's new book may appear, the jacket copy notes the author's 'ambition to know everything about the Hudson--every fish, every bird, every plant--but even though this is impossible' he appears so close to accomplishing it in The Hudson River (W W Norton, 304 pp., \$6.95) that in other hands the book would risk leaving readers with the feelings of the schoolgirl who limited her report on Moby Dick to the observation that it told her more about whales than she really wanted to know.

It is fair measure of Robert Boyle's energies in grappling first-hand with every thing, place, and person to do with the river that he can lay hands on, and his felicitous enthusiasm in sharing the results, that he manages to tell many of us more about the Hudson than we had imagined we wanted to know, so that even the most staunch indoorsmen among us may find ourselves following sturgeon, striped bass and dragonfly ('along with the cockroach, one of the oldest insects extant') with alert absorption. Information comes sheer ('The Piermont marsh is known as the only place where the seaside sparrow (*Amospiza maritima*) has nested away from the coast') and in such anecdotal form as that tracing the nationwide pest of starlings to a Shakespeare enthusiast whose wish to see every bird mentioned by Shakespeare resident in the United States prompted him to turn the introductory batch loose in Central Park in 1890.

So much for entertainment. For those with real interest in the Hudson today and in its future, in its fishes and its ecology, in the pollution problem, the projected expressway, or the Storm King enterprise of that 'notorious dispenser of high-priced electricity, erroneous bills, and bad service,' the book is indispensable. Whether writing of fishing or ecological expeditions, historical forays, conservationist battles, oceanographic studies, prominent scientists, local fishermen or Governor Rockefeller, Boyle is a no-nonsense writer who makes this rather brief book the compendium it is, constraining these few lines to serve as a notice rather than the review which, borrowing on the author's felicity, would logically conclude with his observation that 'there may be more stripers in the Hudson than there are people in New York State. I often find this a cheering thought.'

-- William Gaddis

(William Gaddis, who was a neighbor of Robert Boyle's in Croton-on-Hudson, is now a neighbor of ours in Piermont-on-Hudson.)

A VISIT TO DOYLESTOWN

Three of Piermont's residents, interested in the Village's future and the various proposals made for its downtown area -- visited Doylestown, Pennsylvania -- a nationally recognized success story in private renewal.

The following is a report of what they found. Successful bakers of the Doylestown project have become consultants, helping other small towns and villages with similar problems.

They are available to talk -- no fee for the first consultation -- to small groups of business and other interested people.

Towns across the country face similar problems of deteriorating downtown sections: landlords who fail to repair or renovate outmoded rental units; tenants who settle for less every year in landlord responsibility for inconvenient, unsightly, and often unsafe dwelling places; and merchants whose old customers turn to shopping centers and discount stores.

One town that faced up to its business district and found it wanting was Doylestown, Pa., county seat of Bucks County, which has the same proximity to Philadelphia as Piermont to New York City.

Empty shops, ugly power lines, lack of parking space had led to fewer shoppers; and those who came made only essential stops and drove back on the highway for meals or services. The Doylestown Inn had long since closed its spacious dining room. There were not enough people to use its facilities. The Inn was vacant also as a hostelry. Merchants wore long faces and complained about business, as the twentieth century seemed to have passed their town by.

Dissatisfaction led to the consideration of applying for federal funds to "renew" the town. Somehow, that did not seem to be quite what the town needed. The architecture, a mixture of Dutch from the earliest settlers, French and English from the 18th century alongside early and mid-Victorian buildings, was what made the town special.

A few businessmen decided to try the "do it yourself" approach and a program was launched. Now, four years later, there is an enthusiastic association of merchants eager to tell the "Doylestown story," as they call it. The streets hum with shopping activities, the Inn dining room is filled with business men, shoppers and overnight guests.

Townpeople point out with pride the absence of overhead power lines (buried under the new sidewalks,) the well-planted borders and trim brick corner edging. There's a new modern

design courthouse which has a well-lighted, tastefully landscaped pedestrian area with attractive benches a block from the town's center. But, even better, scarcely any of the old buildings came down to make way for progress.

Architectural changes were simple--a new awning, new stoops with wider, perhaps more shallow steps for shoppers' ease were typical improvements. Large glass windows were given a mullioned effect; signs were appraised as were trim colors. Drawings by a local artist-designer suggested ways to achieve harmony within a block or set of adjoining buildings. Bank officials were cooperative: money for improvements was lent at low interest rates.

Where many shops had been empty, now merchants have needed, in many cases, to enlarge their shop space. Professional offices have been taken in downtown buildings. Some are above the shops. But there are also apartments over some of the stores. The streets do not close up at five o'clock.

To the casual observer, the atmosphere of the town is intoxicating, the buildings are harmonious, the streets clean. In the late fall the thousands of tulips that have been planted could not be appreciated, but the absence of litter, even weeds, in curbside plantings was not overlooked.

The principle movers, responsible for the new Doylestown, are eager to pass on to other towns their story. While no business community of size exists in Piermont, each town is always unique; a smaller citizenry here may find its solution easier to come by. Doylestown's took over four years to effect, and still new plans are underway to make its downtown more convenient as well as more enticing to the shopper, businessman, or passerby.

AN EDITORIAL LETTER

The Piermont Village Dump is something that should never have been. Plenty of people complained about it, both Piermonters and outsiders. Until a few years ago, the dump burned regularly, smoking and smelling up the river valley. But it was cheap, easy, and most people even got used to it. Like people get used to the smoke in Pittsburgh or the smell in Se-caucus. It took the state to stop the burning -- with new laws on air pollution.

Without the burning, the dump filled up pretty fast. Bill Daly even speculated in these pages that it might eventually turn into a tourist attraction -- sort of a trashy Hook Mountain.

It would be nice if the citizens of Piermont could take credit for eliminating the dump. A few complained to the Village Board and the County Board of Health, but nothing happened. With

taxes on the rise, and everyone complaining about them, it's hard to blame the Village Board for not passing an ordinance that would add even more costs. Politicians pretty much have to reflect what the voters want.

It would have been nice if the local plant management had stopped it. But few of them live here. And increasing operating costs isn't the way to win promotions. Plant Manager isn't the top of the corporate ladder.

The dump, of course, violated health ordinances. Finally, an increasing public awareness of the dangers of environmental pollution seems to have filtered to the top. So the credit, as we hear it, has to go to a man in New York City named Hazard. He's the head of Continental Can Corp., a company with multiple plants, and sales of \$1.7 billion and profits of \$90 million last year. Piermont's plant is just a tiny part of it. Mr. Hazard, so we hear, is getting his whole company behind the national goal of cleaning up the air and water. Mr. Hazard doesn't come to Piermont often. The last time he did, he ordered the dump closed. That's more than we did.

Maybe we need more Hazards.

-- Ted Merrill
PCA Newsletter Committee

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I came to Piermont six years ago. The Village's natural setting was exceptionally beautiful. The atmosphere held out a quiet charm. The factory was ugly, the smoke black. And the buildings on the main street were half empty and decaying.

Now, besides having a beautiful setting and a charming atmosphere, we have new paving, new trees, a new bank, a thrift shop, a refurbished Kane Park, a Civic Association, an ugly factory, black smoke and a decaying Main Street. We have come some way, but are we dealing with cosmetics or major surgery?

This fall the Village began contemplating the latter--urban renewal. No one knew much about it but everybody had strong opinions. Two steps that have to precede any actual commitment are the appointment of a Village Planning Board (made up of a cross section from the community) and the hiring of a planning consultant to look at our particular needs.

If you want to know how I stand on urban renewal, (and it's just conceivable you might) I don't stand. I won't stand on a "for" platform or an "against" platform until we all look at the findings of the planning board and the consultant. I hope

to live here a long time. I certainly wouldn't have bought my own house without looking at it, checking out the boiler, the plumbing and the electricity. How can anyone categorically be for or against Urban Renewal when there is obviously good examples and poor examples in its recent history?

I do know that before I would decide on major surgery for myself, I would like a professional diagnostician to have a good look at me. Therefore, I am strongly in favor of the hiring of a planning consultant. As for the planning board, we should have had one years ago. It might come up with no end of good ideas, with or without urban renewal.

We need not necessarily embrace the concept of urban renewal, but let's not be afraid of being introduced to it.

-- James Hammerstein
President
Piermont Civic Association

THIS ISSUE was produced by the Newsletter Committee of the Piermont Civic Association: Robert Bradbury, Rosemary and Bob Cone, Charles Grutzner, Margaret Holihan, and Lisa and Ted Merrill. Special writers were Judy Miller and William Gaddis. Sally Savage took the pictures and Cynthia Crippen was editor. The committee always welcomes new members or special feature writers. Please contact any of the above people if you want to join.

The PCA Newsletter is published four times a year for all of Piermont and anyone else who is interested in the village.

The PCA always wants new members, their ideas and their participation.

It costs only \$1.00 to join -- per person, per year. Just fill in the sheet below and mail or bring to the next PCA Meeting. Mailing Address: PCA, Box 365, Piermont, NY

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