

# PIERMONT NEWSLETTER

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Piermont Civic Association

## NEW RIVER VIEW PARK IN PIERMONT-- IF

Piermont will have one of the handsomest park and civic center complexes in the river valley if-- and it's a big if-- South Orangetown School District voters approve the sale of the old school land by the Board of Education at an August 12 referendum.

The property that the Village wants to acquire contains the relic of the old Tappan Zee High School and lies between Piermont Avenue and Hudson Terrace, north of Ash Street. When it acquires the land, the Village plans to demolish the school building and convert a smaller building, now used as an elementary school, to recreational purposes, as a headquarters for civic groups and the Piermont Library. The funds for conversion to a park and for maintenance of the grounds will come partly from Federal sources and partly from Piermont's revenue from the new sewer right-of-way.

With the completion of the new elementary school on 9W, the School Board had classified as obsolete the Piermont property, along with other parcels in the school district. At its last meeting, the School Board voted to sell the Piermont property to the Village for one dollar subject to approval by taxpayers in the South Orangetown District, while auctioning off the other properties to the highest bidder. Therefore, the August 12 referendum will contain sections on both proposals. "It is important that voters in the district understand that the Piermont proposal is not a giveaway of school land," Mayer DiFrancesca said. "It is the only way the land can be put to a useful purpose. Piermont must convince residents of the entire school district to vote 'yes' if it wants a park and civic center instead of a derelict structure on a weed-grown lot. Piermonters must get the word out to the district before August 12."

## VILLAGE BOARD AND PCA CONTINUING FIGHT FOR FAIRER TAX ASSESSMENTS

The Orangetown Board of Assessors, whose taxable valuations have brought unconscionable increases to Piermont property owners, has now admitted that more than half of the disputed local valuations which it has reviewed on an individual basis were unfair.

On the basis of figures supplied by Rudolph G. Behrent, Board of Assessors chairman, this proves the contention of the Piermont Civic Association and the Village Trustees that Piermont was discriminated against in the reappraisals made a year ago by the United Appraisal Company and reflected in this year's tax bills. As of May 20, the last date for which figures were made available, 22 percent of the Orangetown assessments on which individual reviews were made were admittedly faulty and resulted in downward revisions, compared with 55 percent for Piermont.

Mayor Bo DiFrancesca, whose requests for a review of all land property valuations in the Village have been rejected so far by Orangetown officials, told the Newsletter that the Town Board's own figures supported the charge that unincorporated areas, including luxury home developments in Pearl River, had been given favored treatment over Piermont.

A year ago, when the Orangetown Board advised taxpayers of their new valuations, Newsletter reported the complaints of many homeowners whose increased valuations were inconsistent with realty trends.

Orangetown officials sought at that time to allay the fears of Piermonters with a blanket statement that the valuation increases weren't what they appeared. This panacea was exposed when the January tax bills showed that homes jumped 50 percent in valuation had been hit with substantial increases in actual tax.

New demands for a reappraisal were made to the Board of Assessors and Town Supervisor John B. Lovett by the Mayor, the Village Board and by citizens. The April Newsletter reported that Richard A. Clucas had obtained 247 signatures, representing owners of more than half of the properties in Piermont, to a petition for a restudy of the Piermont tax increases. Still ignoring all requests for a Village-wide restudy, Supervisor Lovett sent a letter to all signers of the petition advising them that if they wanted any reconsideration they should apply on an individual basis to an Advisory Board of Tax Assessments. Each protesting taxpayer thus carried the burden of proving that his property assessment was unfair, even though the Lovett letter conceded that the reappraisals had been made on a "mass production" basis by the hired company. Because the average homeowner lacks the professional training and the time required to obtain comparative data for an effective individual presentation, a majority passed up that procedure and

pinned their hopes for fair play on the continuing efforts of the Piermont Village Board to obtain a general review from the Board of Assessors.

As of April 18, according to Mr. Behrendt, chairman of the Board of Assessors, only nine individual requests for review had been received and adjustments had been made in five of those cases. In a letter of that date to Dale L. Hiestand, president of the Piermont Civic Association, Mr. Behrendt accused the Newsletter of "an excessive use of literary license" for having reported that Piermont had been treated unfairly in the reassessments.

Mr. Behrendt's lengthy letter repeated the assessors' earlier declarations of high purpose and methods of assigning new valuations to all properties in the township. Supervisor Lovett asked Mr. Hiestand to have the letter published in its entirety in Newsletter in the interests of "fair play." Mr. Hiestand has turned the matter over to the editors of Newsletter to handle as they see fit. The editors have decided against a pointless reiteration of the Board of Assessors' specious arguments, particularly since the letter makes it plain that the Board found their hired appraisers had made faulty and excessive valuations in five of the nine cases reviewed.

The Newsletter has learned that a few more individual requests for review were filed after April 18 and that downward revision was made in one or more of those cases.

Piermont officials have not given up the fight. Mayor Di Francesca met with the three members of the Advisory Review Board --Charles Gross, John Crowley and Frederick R. Horne--and submitted to them the sort of comparisons an average homeowner would find it difficult to prepare. He showed that some plots that were highly assessed as "waterfront" properties were actually "underwater" during part of the year.

"The members of the Advisory Review Board reacted favorably to our request for a general restudy of all land valuations in Piermont," said Mr. DiFrancesca this week. "They said they would recommend such a restudy to Orangetown officials instead of putting the onus on each property owner. But their recommendation, if it was made, was apparently rejected by Mr. Lovett and Mr. Behrendt. Mr. Gross subsequently informed me by letter that the Board of Assessors felt it would be "impossible" to make the requested restudy."

The letter from Mr. Gross stated incidentally that 241 taxpayers in all of Orangetown had individually requested reviews and that adjustments had been granted in 53 cases. This, too, seems to Newsletter a high ratio of error in the reappraisals made a year ago.

Mayor DiFrancesca will shortly seek a meeting of Orangetown with Piermont officials and representative citizens to show how a Village-wide restudy can be made without hiring new appraisers. Meanwhile individual citizens may still write to the Board of Review (or telephone EL 9-5100) for a review of their assessment increases.

#### VILLAGE FORMULATES MASTER WATERFRONT PLAN

Stores, offices, a swimming pool and a marina are all part of a comprehensive plan for development of the Piermont waterfront.

As shown in a sketch fashioned by the Rockland County Planning Board at the request of the Village trustees, an elaborate park-like development at the northwest corner of the Continental Can property would be the site of the development.

The plan was triggered by the response of the State Small Boat Division to numerous requests by the Board of Trustees for the dredging of Piermont Bay. At the last meeting, at which Mayor DiFrancesca represented Piermont, the State agreed to do the dredging on two conditions: 1. that the Village own a portion of the waterfront. 2. that total accommodations in the bay (including private as well as public marinas) exceed 600 boats.

The Village's plan not only takes the State's demands in stride, it also provides for further improvements to make maximum use of the space. Along with the plan submitted to the State, the Mayor presented a four-point master plan in which he described how the waterfront project would also:

1. preserve Piermont's character and improve its appearance
2. expand the economic base
3. provide for appropriate community facilities
4. regulate the course of future development

EMPIRE HOSE COMPANY IN THE NEWS

(The following reprinted  
from the Sparkill Annex  
First Graders' newspaper)

"The Applebee's house went up in flames Tuesday, April 22, 1969. It started from the stove, when they were cooking pot roast."  
by Molly W.



"A big fire by the gas station spread all over the field and almost got caught in Lawrence Park."  
by Marci G.

"Jessica's house burned down."  
by Margaret C.

"There was a big fire at the hill near Chris's house."  
by Suzanne D.

Although they may be guilty of over-vivid reporting, even six year olds know about the many services Piermont's active fire department performs throughout the year. In addition to being there when they are needed, the firemen are active in all areas and the village life. Sponsoring an annual essay contest on fire prevention for the school children, open-house at the station, the Fourth of July Carnival and the exciting rides for children on the shiny fire truck are all annual events.

And on Flag Day this year Piermonters were treated to a slam-bang four-hour parade when the Piermont firemen hosted the 56th annual convention of the New Jersey and New York Volunteer Firemen's Association. At the convention Village Clerk, John Boyan was elected president of the 50,000-member body.

The Empire Hose Company received a trophy presented by Mayor DiFrancesca on behalf of the Village Board for "running the convention and parade."

## VILLAGE SPONSORS YOUTH CENTER

The Piermont Youth Center received a major boost when the Piermont Village Board took over as its sponsor.

Acknowledging the work of the PCA in getting the group moving, the Board appointed the PCA Teen Center Committee -- Dale Hiestand, Charlotte Bordwell, Clarence Branch and Brian Holihan -- to set up an enlarged committee, representing Piermont and Sparkill as the group's sponsors.

Anne Hickey, Ernest Tebo, Vito Sorriento, Frances Cooper and Jim Alise, Jr. were named. William Lynch and Howard Brawner were appointed by the Village as liaison members.

The committee plans to operate the center on a \$2000 annual budget -- \$1000 provided by the Village and the balance to come from fund-raising and contributions. High on the priority list is the plan to hire a teacher from the South Orangetown School system to serve as director. The group meets in the annex on Hudson Terrace.

The teen-agers elected Marty Trask president and started off their summer activities with a dance on June 20th.

## DR. FRITZ EINSTEIN

When Dr. Fritz Einstein died in his sleep on April 8 he had been a resident of Piermont just over four years. He was past 70 when he moved here and might have been expected to seek a backwater and remain uninvolved; but the quiet ending of his brief life among us leaves a gap that is still felt through every dimension of the community.

Dr. Einstein mattered to Piermont because Piermont mattered so much to him. With his old-world courtesy and his pluck he could have made himself fit in anywhere, but daily he rejoined at being at home in Piermont. The fulfillment he found here helped him to bounce back from one severe physical set-back after another.

He was a man without pretense. He did not try to be more or less than he was. He could acknowledge the uniqueness and dignity that each person feels in himself. This leaves others free to be exactly what they are -- and unlocks warmth. If, occasionally, someone mistook his lack of front for inexperience or weakness, it was not for long; the pride, decisiveness and scalpel-sharpness of the man quickly restored perspective.

As a doctor his lack of pretense put him in the old school. The trouble he took for his patients extended to home visits often at uncomfortable hours and to remote parts of the county. He had special concern for the old and the poor. The depth of his caring might have made him too vulnerable. He was saved by his flair for throwing the conversation slightly off balance and into laughter, often at his own expense. His understanding of suffering and his sense of humor -- these were the coefficients of his great humanity.

He was born in 1894 and in the Germany of his youth was a pawn of the military as American young men are today. Because his father was a doctor he was given quasi-medical chores in the German army of World War I, and quite naturally turned to medicine. He was barely established in his profession when Nazism uprooted him and terminated his first marriage. Leaving the homeland with two teen-aged children to start all over in a new country is burden enough; to take such an opportunity knowing the fate of millions left behind adds to the burden.

Everywhere and with gratitude he made good friends. He married again, and later, with the fifteen year old son of that marriage, nursed his second wife through a long illness to death by cancer. Setting about to rebuild his life after that ordeal, he sought out a long-time friend, widowed for many years, and prevailed upon her to separate from those five of her children established in Germany. With her eighteen year old daughter she helped him make a new life here.

Susi Einstein's daughter is now married and living in California. Mrs. Einstein has spent six strenuous years easing things for Fritz wherever the yoke of his beloved profession chaffed as his years advanced and his endurance lessened. She claims to be still perfecting her English. In this she was always far ahead of Fritz who sighed, after splicing two unrelated words, "Every time I open my mouth I enrich the language".

The community values Susi Einstein's contribution to Fritz's life and service among us and enjoys her for herself. We hope she will remain with us in the little grey house at the northern end of Piermont's Main Street, where the sidewalk is still on the left, before it moves to the right through Grandview. Fritz would have loved that idea. I wonder if he noticed it.

-- Helen Norman

## COMMUNITY PLAY SCHOOL FINANCES IN THE BLACK

The Community Play School has completed this year's operation with a twenty dollar profit. Fund raising included a wine and cheese party last fall, netting \$270; a performance by the Pro Musica group on May 11th, which brought in \$180; and a chicken dinner on June 12th, served both in Sparkill and Palisades, which raised a total of \$350 from both locations. Contributions and Thrift Shop profits provided the balance.

The school's sponsors are particularly touched that Susi Einstein chose the School as recipient of contributions made in the memory of Dr. Fritz Einstein.

Next year's budget should be at least \$500 less according to Mrs. Carl Dahlgren. A volunteer is taking over the school's administration, and the teachers' salaries will be reduced slightly. It is hoped that the surplus money will be put toward the price of a piece of outdoor play equipment.

Wagons and other wheel toys which can be used by several children simultaneously are needed. Anyone who can make such a donation can phone El 9-0854.

Applications for the school's classes for three and four-year-olds may be had by writing to Box 32, Sparkill, New York.

## VILLAGE TO PROVIDE MERRY-GO-ROUND FOR KANE PARK

The Piermont Village Board's \$500 allotment for the purchase of a merry-go-round for Kane Park (most-wanted large piece of play equipment according to an informal poll of local children) is a major addition to the park's redevelopment.

Kane Park Committee members have selected a large boulder to display the commemorative plaque which will stand at the park's entrance, provided a coat of white paint for the fence and planted a large shade tree.

Future plans include a second coat of paint, seeding or sodding the park's surface and building a small summer house in the southwest corner of the area.



## SUMMER ACTIVITIES AT THE LIBRARY

The long, lazy days of summer are here, but at the Piermont Library they are neither dull nor empty. Our new librarian, Miss Grace Meyer, and an able crew of volunteers have prepared many exciting programs. There will be two film programs for children during July.

Wednesday, July 9 at 2:00 PM -- "Rolling Rice Ball,"  
"Chinese Shadow Play" and "Japanese Boy, The Story of Taro."

Wednesday, July 16, 2:00 PM -- "Between the Tides," "Wild,  
Wild River" and "Moods of Surfing."

Regular Wednesday morning story hours will continue at 10:15 AM for two age groups -- two and three year olds (upstairs meeting room) and four to six year olds (downstairs children's room). Coffee is served for mothers. In addition, a story program for ages four through six, Under the Umbrella, will be held at Kane Park, Friday mornings at 10:30 starting July 11th through August 1st. The program will continue throughout August if there is sufficient demand. In case of rain, the Umbrella will move to the library.

Older readers can build their own shell collection through the Beachcomber Club. Registration will be on July 7th at the library, and the program will run for eight weeks. Members are required to read at least one library book of their choice a week and may come at any time the library is open to show the person at the desk their brief comments about the book, recorded in the notebook with which they have been provided. Upon completion of each book, the member may select a shell. There will be no regular meetings of the Beachcomber Club at the library so vacationing children may join and take their books with them on their travels.

Speaking of travels, parents and children both may find it convenient on a busy day to return their library books at the new book drop on Main Street at the Tappan Zee Bank. This is a gift for the library and the community from the Rotary Club -- a most welcome addition.

Others with a yen to travel (locally and on foot) will be interested in two nature walks which Miss Meyer has planned. One will be out the Pier, the other in Tallman Park along the river. Did you see the gallery display -- "Herbarium" -- during June at the library? Many of these specimens from Grace Meyer's private collection were gathered locally, and demonstrating the unusual varieties of plants to be found on the Pier and along the river banks.

The gallery display for July is Herbs, Garden Variety from the collection of Mrs. Marie Hand of Grand View. During August the display will be Summer Activities in and Around Piermont and will range from biking and boating to nature walks and historic tours. The library has a good supply of books on these subjects which can help you plan your own summer projects.

For those who might like to spend a few hours learning to weave rush chair seats, Mrs. George Bryan has scheduled a Rushing Class. The class will be held on two Mondays, July 14th and 21st from 9:30 to 12:30 at the library (which will supply the materials). Sign up now at the library bulletin board.

Again this year there will be a summer cooperative library program between Piermont, Pearl River and Blauvelt. The following programs will be held at the Piermont Library on successive Wednesdays:

Sandcasting - Cynthia Boyer (ages 6-8) on July 23  
Torn Paper Design - Mimi Bryan (ages 4-6) on July 30  
Puppet Making - Betty Gibson (ages 8-10) on August 6

The library is now following its summer schedule: Monday, Wednesday and Fridays from 10 a.m. to Noon; 3 to 5; and 8 to 10 p.m. Come in and do your own thing at the Piermont Library this summer.

-- Lisa Merrill

#### THRIFT SHOP DISTRIBUTES FUNDS

\$1,047.75 was distributed to thirteen participating organizations at the end of its first quarter of operations in 1969.

The shop will again close for a brief summer vacation on Saturday July 26 and will reopen on Saturday September 16th. All clothing will be sale priced during the last two weeks before vacation (July 15-26). A few special articles from the shop will be on sale at the Tappantown Fair in the fall.

#### PCA PLANTERS PUT IN PACHYSANDRA

With the help of some eager youngsters and undaunted by the attentions of an unsolicited dog, PCA volunteer gardeners spent several weekend mornings in May planting pachysandra around the base of Main Street's trees.

The green-thumbers, under Daisy Spencer's direction, included her husband, Douglas; Monica and Bob Bradbury; Lisa Merrill; Kathryn Smith; Charlie Grutzner; Ed McPhearson and Millette Hämmerstein. The children were Donald, Ronnie, Kathy and Vicki. The dog, wisely, prefers to remain anonymous.

### THERE'S A WOODCHUCK AT THE BOTTOM OF OUR GARDEN!

When we bought our house and quarter acre on the river a few years ago, our one regret was that we would be parting company with an assortment of wild animals who frequently visited our previous house on the site of the present Lawrence Park Apartments. There, on the edge of woods that extended unfenced over several large estates and connected up with the Palisades Interstate Park, we were accustomed to seeing deer, foxes, and, on one memorable occasion, a large family of skunks. Our new house was to be in an area much more densely populated and separated from those same woods by 9W, the Erie Railroad and River Road; we hardly expected to see many wild animals.

We could not have been more mistaken. Not only have we run into a large variety of animals, but since some of them have established permanent residence on our property, we have come to know them better than our occasional guests on the Lawrence estate.

Our first animal encounter was with a Catholic woodchuck from the church next door who came for lunch one day just as Monica's flower garden was beginning to bloom. With shocking inhospitality and disregard for the village ordinances (not to mention the spirit of ecumenism) she let fly at him with my 4.10 gauge shotgun from an upstairs window which, by the way, she had neglected to open. She insists that he was mortally wounded, as was each of the brothers, sisters and descendants who have appeared over the years since. There's never been a corpus delecti so whether it is a guerilla band or just the same old tough-skinned gourmand, the war goes on, I continue to mend windows, and we do have woodchucks.

Our next visit was also an outlaw -- a huge racoon we surprised raiding our garbage cans one night. We quickly established that we were more frightened of him than he of us and so contented ourselves with making threatening gestures from the dining room window. The following day we bought a racoon-proof garbage can. On his next visit he was so amused by this gesture, he removed the lid and scattered the contents over our entire yard. Wisely sensing the danger of a war on two fronts, Monica made a humiliating peace settlement with the racoon in order to concentrate her forces on the woodchuck. Edible garbage is now left at the top of the pile with the lid ajar.

In the fall our first permanent resident moved in. The crawl space under most of our house is not separate from the small cellar; the cellar walls go up to within a foot of the floor joists and stop allowing one to peer into this space and see under the entire house. I was in the cellar turning off the outside water faucets on the first really cold day when I heard a noise in the crawl space. Looking up, I found myself being studied calmly by an immense opossum, curled up in a nest of brown leaves which had blown in through an areaway. "He must go," I thought, but he looked exactly like George Arliss, whom I have always admired. I hesitated. Finally, I poked him gently with a stick, which produced an audible sigh of impatience, and he arose. With great dignity and in no hurry, he moved a few feet out of sight behind a rock. I must have stared at the rock for twenty minutes before I realized that there was very little else I could do and so I went back to my work. A few minutes later, as I started up the cellar steps, I glanced over and there he was, curled up in his bed of leaves and staring down at me over that aristocratic nose. George still lives in our cellar.

I think it was the next spring that we first noticed the muskrat. He lives in the rock and log cribbing that forms our sea wall. All summer long he busily forages in the river for sea weed. He swims out twenty or thirty feet from the wall to a spot where it is plentiful and executes a sudden surface dive that never fails to evoke a smile. There's something so pert and joyous in the action. As he submerges the last thing visible is his long hairless tail which seems to form a question mark as he goes out of sight. Long minutes later he will reappear at the surface with a strand of weed in his mouth, trailing back in the wake on either side of his head, and as he swims back toward his nest there is an almost irresistible impression that he is smiling. He's a cheerful, industrious little character, and I've seen him at work at all hours -- at dawn, late at night, and all the times in between.

The river, of course, is the source of a lot more wild life, both fish and water birds. From our deck along the river we catch (and eat) perch, catfish and eels. It's too shallow for striped bass, although we have caught one or two small ones. Huge carp spawn every spring in the tall water grass opposite the church, and a good sized sturgeon washed up on the beach once so we know they're there. In addition to the usual migrating ducks, the now familiar swans, and the usual varieties of water birds, we have frequently seen cormorants and for several years in a row the same kingfisher has come back to hunt fish from a favorite perch in our yard.

So the wild life on just one small piece of property in Piermont adds up to quite an impressive list, and with the natural protection afforded by adjacent park land and the river, the animals should be able to hold their own reasonably well against the inevitable human encroachments of the future.

## TALLMAN PARK -- PIERMONT'S BACKYARD VACATION SPOT

Piermonters need not travel far to find a quiet and natural beauty spot. Just follow the blue blaze to Tallman Mountain; discovery is always an adventure!

The green rug of The Meadows creeps toward the channel presenting a fascinating collage of plant and animal life. Monsters of the deep, huge sturgeon and great striped bass, lurk offshore. The bass caught by Angelo last spring weighed thirty-three pounds. Doubters can soon see it mounted on a wall at Fort Comfort Inn.

Possibly fifty species of birds can be seen during the year, ranging in size from humming to bald. And they come in all colors.

Foxtails and cattails comprise most of the grass, but wildflower lovers should give a closer look.

Deer and hundreds of muskrats, racoons and possum make this their spa, some staying year round.

No matter what the season there is always a fascinating panorama of nature to see.

-- Leonard Hunt

## NOTES ON SOME PIERMONT NEWCOMERS...

People who move to Piermont generally tend to stay...and stay. In this village where a resident of ten years or less is termed a newcomer, where one's tenure is quickly judged by which previous owner's name you call a particular house, the turnover is slow --- as anyone who has tried to buy in Piermont can tell you.

In the past year, however, circumstances have brought about some changes, and the Newsletter decided to find out why and from where some of the new families happened to join our community. Gloria Blauhut, co-owner of the Quackenbos house, was the interviewer.

The road to Hudson Terrace led from New Zealand via London for Ron and Elaine Appelbe. Piermont's similarity to an English village first attracted them and they settled in about a year ago with their now three-year-old daughter, Nicola, and their two cats, Brenda and Orlando. Chief photographer for Business Week (and the newsletter), Appelbe majored in photography at the University of Cologne. In London he did free lance work, and his wife worked

with an advertising agency. Both Appelbes are wild about auctions and antique shops; Elaine collects tea caddies and wood boxes, Ron, as you might guess, old cameras and microscopes.

Around the corner on the top of Ritie Street live Bill and Judith Gaddis. Moving here is the result of an off and on three year search in the area, triggered by a visit to the Ft. Comfort Inn for dinner. Following up an ad for a Victorian house in the New York Times, they bought it, virtually upon first sight. Gaddis is a writer whose major novel, The Recognitions, a study of forgery "on the largest scale and in the fullest sense of the word," has been widely praised. (It's on the shelf of the Piermont Library.) He has written for The New Yorker and is working now on another novel.

His wife, a former Glamour magazine staffer, is busy renovating their house as well as designing off-beat clothes for boutiques.

The Windisch's house is slated to be "the Windisch house"; they are the first owners of this contemporary aerie on 9W. While living in Tappan and Blauvelt, they kept an eye on Piermont -- because it is on the river, because it is a village and because they felt there is involvement here. For the past nine years Charles Windisch has been a marine geophysicist at Lamont Institute in Palisades. Working on studies of the sub-bottom of the ocean, he has voyaged on the Vema to all parts of the world. Louise Windisch, a Barnard graduate, has made maps in Columbia's geology department, worked for the State Bureau of Mines in Reno, Nevada and currently puts in two days a week as a draftsman at Lamont. Besides tending to their children - Tom, five years and Jill, two years -- she reads avidly and weaves rugs and fabrics on her own loom.

#### NEW FACES TO OLD BUILDINGS

Some facelifting is in store for Piermont. Several buildings dating back to Piermont's beginning have new owners.

A major change on the local scene will be to the building on Main Street which formerly housed the Piermont Emporium. It has been bought by a Piermont-Grandview resident who wishes to be un-named as of now. A store, however, similar to the Emporium will occupy the lower floor of the building, according to the new owner, and he expects to display and sell inventory on the vacant lot to the north. He also plans future renovations depending on the Village's plans. "A joint effort has to be made if changes are to come," he said.

Also on Piermont Avenue, Number 599 -- formerly the parish house for the Methodist Church (which later became Lyric Theatre

before that burned down) -- has been bought and renovated by Bob Cone and Ted Merrill. Cone is now using the house as an office.

Margaret English and Virginia Johnston -- the Village's most industrious renovators -- have acquired a small house on the creek in the Bogartown section (eastern end of Paradise Avenue) which was previously owned by the Radena family. The one hundred year old house has been raised twenty-five inches to prevent flood damage and to reach its new, wood shingle roof.

#### BOARD REPORTED TO FAVOR PARK ON ERIE RIGHT-OF-WAY

The PCA has long been on record as favoring a walking-bicycle path along the Erie right-of-way north of Ash Street. Recently, Mayor DiFrancesca affirmed that the Village Board also favored a park for the scenic site. However, the Mayor said, the Board is not able to act on the proposal immediately. Once the right-of-way is declared parkland, it can only be used for park purposes. This would interfere with the laying of the joint sewer pipe along the right-of-way -- a project which will bring revenue to the village.

Once Orangetown has started excavations, the Mayor said, the Village can declare the land a park. This will probably happen before Fall.

Meanwhile, Piermonters continue to hear rumors of the State's plans to add new lanes to 9W. "The right-of-way could be appropriated," a speaker said recently at a PCA executive board meeting. "That's another reason why we need that land designated as parkland -- soon."

#### ON THE PIERMONT CONSTRUCTION FRONT...

Several Piermont construction projects are proceeding at a satisfactory pace, while others are experiencing unexpected delays. The construction of new sidewalks is being held up, hopefully temporarily, by Orangetown's withholding of funds for the joint sewer project. Orangetown officials maintain that \$20,000 currently owed the Village will be paid after a certain amount of necessary red tape. Village officials expect the work to resume in the fall.

Piermont has given approval for a temporary sewage effluent disposal pipe being constructed by the County Sewer Commission.

The pipe runs south next to the Highway Department garage, under Piermont Avenue, and terminates in Sparkill Creek. The Village has been assured that the effluent has been processed to the point where no odors or contamination will result. The Village Board has okayed the construction, which will save the County \$200,000---the cost of the temporary pipe to the pier. If the present system proves unsatisfactory, the Village will demand the more expensive alternative. In either case, the temporary pipeline will be replaced by a permanent outflow to the end of the pier within nine months.

The State is currently surveying traffic on 9W as a step towards improving safety at the new Tappan Zee Elementary School, and the Village Board is scheduled to meet with Continental Can to remedy what Mayor DiFrancesca calls the "deplorable" condition of the village dump.

#### COLORFUL SCULPTURES ATTRACT ATTENTION

An eastward glance from the old school on Piermont Avenue has been causing many a double-take.

The reason for the second look is a series of towering, free-form wooden sculptures, silhouetted against the river. They are the work of Harold Goldstein who lives in the Mine Hole area on Sparkill Creek.

Primarily a painter, Goldstein is also a sculptor and teacher. These sculptures are cut out of plywood and colored with acrylic paints.

Goldstein teaches art at the Rockland Country Day School.

#### EDITORIAL

For years Piermonters have talked about how great it would be to turn the old school property and annex on Hudson Terrace into a playground and civic center. Now the good news (reported elsewhere in this issue) is that Mayor DiFrancesca has taken steps to do just that. He has persuaded the School Board to sell the property to the village for one dollar, contingent on approval by all the voters in the South Orangetown School District in August 12th's referendum.

And there's the rub. It's perfectly natural for people, constantly faced with higher taxes, to vote against any step which appears to be a give-away. Actually, proceeds from the public



auction of the property would be slight. Distributed among the taxpayers of the old School District 3 (Sparkill-Grandview-Piermont) the benefits, financially, would be barely discernable. But the development of a badly-needed community facility to be used by children, teen-agers, senior citizens--in fact, all age groups in this area is tangible and long-lasting.

All our neighbors in South Orangetown will surely go along with this plan -- if they understand it. It's up to all the people in Piermont to campaign for such understanding and to get out the vote to pass this referendum.

#### PIERMONT-SPARKILL SUBJECT OF COLLEGE COURSE

The Piermont-Sparkill area will be closely scrutinized this summer by students taking a three-credit course offering an in-depth study of a Hudson River shore community.

Sponsored jointly by the Hudson River Valley Commission and the Rockland Community College, the course's purpose will be to make specific recommendation for further land use, historic preservation, riverfront development and related topics.

Instructors are Colin Faulds, member of the college's history department and Lewis Rubenstein, historian on the Commission. There will also be six keynote lectures by specialists in urban and regional planning and development, architecture, preservation and preservation and the law. Students will also be required to do up to three hours of field work a week.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As my year as President of the Piermont Civic Association ends, I want to make a few personal observations. I have enjoyed every minute of it. The reason is simple. The people of Piermont, the members and executive board of the Association, the Village Board, the Village employees--all have been as cooperative as they possibly could have been.

The key to cooperation is simple because Piermonsters always ask one question: Is it good for Piermont? If the answer is yes, any person, any idea, any project will gain cooperation.

The cooperative spirit in Piermont was never more evident than during the effort of the past six months to establish the Piermont Youth Center. The steering committee from the Civic Association secured the cooperation of the ROCAC Youth Group,

the CYO, the Piermont Rotary Club, the Piermont Village Board, the South Orangetown School Board, a group of students at St. Thomas Aquinas, and great numbers of local citizens. As reported in another column, the two youth groups merged to become the Piermont Youth Center, and it is now a Village activity with an appropriation, meeting regularly in the School annex. Cooperation, goodwill, energy and the patience to work out all the details were the essential ingredients.

The same ingredients can be found in all the activities of the Association, which now comprise a long list of successes:

1. The Tappan Zee Thrift Shop
2. The Newsletter
3. Planting trees and greenery along Main Street
4. Refurbishing Kane Park
5. The Piermont Youth Center

As soon as the legal problems can be handled, the declaration of the right-of-way as Village Parkland should join this list.

It has been a wonderful personal experience this past year to sit where I could see such good works continue and grow. I thank the hardworking members of the executive board and the Association for the privilege. I thank the Mayor, the Village Board, and the people of Piermont for their cooperation and help.

It's nice to be a Piermonter.

Dale L. Hiestand  
President,  
Piermont Civic Association

#### AN INFORMAL MASTHEAD

From the time it began formal operations in the fall of 1966, the PCA has published a newsletter roughly four times a year. Mailed to all Piermont residents (and a small list of other interested people), the Newsletter tries to cover Piermont news and news which affects Piermont.

Bob Cone was founder and editor for over a year and then, at his request, the Newsletter Committee decided to rotate the editorship among themselves. Ted Merrill took over the next three issues. Cynthia Crippen is this month's editor.

Alphabetically, the following make up the staff: Gloria Blauhut, Bob Bradbury, Bob and Rosemary Cone, Cynthia Crippen, Bill Daly, Charlie Grutzner and Lisa and Ted Merrill.

Special writers this month are Helen Norman and Leonard Hunt.

The Newsletter Committee is only too eager to entice new members, either to its standing committee which sets policy and plans the issues or as special features writers. If interested, please contact any of the above.

Clip Coupon and send to Box 365, Piermont, New York, 10968

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JOIN THE PCA -- ANNUAL DUES NOW DUE! \$1.00 per person; \$2.00 per family.

I want to be part of the PCA's fourth year of service to my village. Enclosed is \_\_\_\_\_ my dues; \_\_\_\_\_ family dues; \_\_\_\_\_ contribution.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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