

# THE PIERMONT NEWSLETTER

VOLUME X, No. 1

PUBLISHED BY THE PIERMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION

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## DEDICATION

This issue of the Piermont Newsletter is dedicated with respect and deep affection to the memory of Robert Reavis, who passed away in December 1975.

He made many flowers bloom.

## THE LION OF RAILWAYS

This article is an excerpt from a Guide to the Erie Railroad published in 1851. It is published now, as it was published in the November 1965 issue of The New Magazine, a magazine published in Piermont in the 60's by Charlotte Bordwell. The New Magazine was an exciting publication of happenings in the county, art, literature, history—a bit of something to interest everyone. Charlotte has graciously given permission to the Newsletter to reprint some of the articles pertaining to the history and lore of Piermont.

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Before introducing a friend to a stranger, it is advisable to give him some account of the person whose acquaintance he is about to make; and so, fellow-traveler, whom I introduce to the New York and Erie Rail-Road, it may be well to prefix here a brief sketch of the history and present condition of this, the Lion of Railways. True, he is yet in an unfinished state, but you will find that what there is of him is complete, and of wondrous organization and

activity. His magnificent head and front repose in grandeur on the shores of the Hudson; his iron lungs puff vigorously among the Highland fastnesses of Rockland; his capacious maw "fares sumptuously" on the dairies of Orange, and the game and cattle of Broome; his *lumbar region* is built upon the timber of Chemung, and the tuft of his royal extremity floats triumphantly on the water of Lake Erie. In plain words, we will record briefly the origin, progress, and history of the road.

In connection with the internal improvement system of New York, many curious facts may be found by looking into the Statute-book of the Colony of New York—instructive as to the beginning of the great railroad and canal system which is now nearly completed, and, from the various connections between the port of New York and the Lakes, ultimately to be extended to the Pacific Ocean. In the *time of Queen Anne*, the Assembly of the Colony of New York appropriated the sum of £500 to John Smith and some other persons for the purpose of constructing a public road leading from New York to the West, and the appropriation was

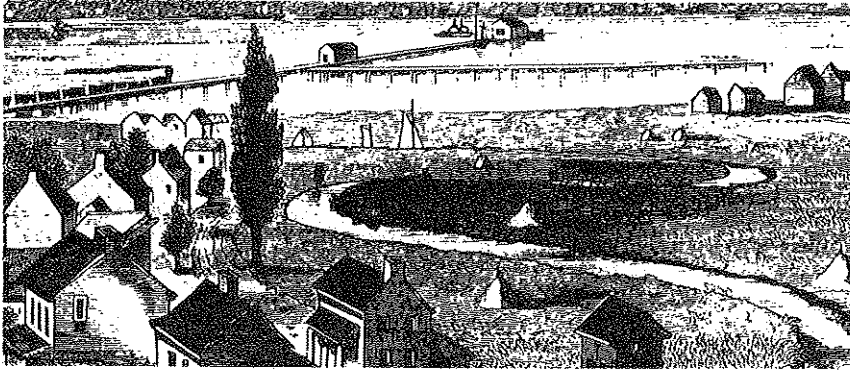
coupled with the conditions that within two years from the time of the passage of the act the beneficiaries should have constructed the road, wide enough for two carriages to pass, from "Nyack on the Hudson River to Sterling Iron-works," a distance of twenty or thirty miles; and that they should cut away the limbs of trees over the track, so as to allow the carriages to pass. That was the beginning of the internal improvement system of the State of New York, which, after the lapse of more than one hundred and twenty years, has proceeded no further than to open a canal and two railroads, one of which is completed, and the other nearly so, from the city of New York to Lake Erie....

....The first portion, a section of 46 miles, from Piermont to Goshen, was put in operation on the 23rd of September, 1841. In 1842, under its complicated embarrassments, arising from the nature and amount of its indebtedness, the affairs of the company were placed in the hands of assignees. After encountering many obstacles and embarrassments attending and following the suspension of the work, and after various efforts to obtain the means necessary to extricate the company from its difficulties, and to a resumption of the work, the law was passed by the Legislature, 14th of May, 1845, relating to the construction of the road, the release of the state claim, subscriptions to the stock, &c. The Board of Directors (at present mostly in control of the road) entered upon the discharge of their responsible duties of resuscitating a work which is destined to add permanent wealth and prosperity to the city and state, and presented a plan to the public which placed the work in a position to be successfully prosecuted to completion. The appeal was responded to by the merchants and business men of New York, and the subscription of \$3,000,000 to the capital stock was speedily filled up. Successive portions of the road were put in operation from time to time, until now it stretches across the whole state,

from the Hudson to Lake Erie, three hundred miles into the interior, producing results beyond the most sanguine expectation of its early friends. A considerable portion of the country traversed by the route, without being mountainous, has an undulating surface, intersected throughout nearly its whole extent by a chain or series of rivers, pursuing, with little deviation, the general line of direction of the route of the road. Those streams are free from sudden falls, flowing at a gentle rate of descent, seldom exceeding fifteen, and frequently less than two feet to the mile, and presenting on their margins alluvial flats, interrupted in a few cases (principally on the Delaware) by projecting bluffs.

With these preliminary hints of the road we are to travel, let us now step aboard of the "Thomas Powell" lying at the company's pier at the foot of Duane Street (Manhattan). This wharf is covered with a substantial wooden tenement, 300 feet in length, for the protection of the freight intrusted to the company; and owing to the constant increase in business, growing with the extension of the road, this vast shed always contains piles of the productions brought down from its various sections. Milk-cans, strawberry baskets, butter-tubs, and immense deer lie in heaps, the representatives of their different regions, and, in exchange for these, there are the *luxuries* destined for the inland towns and sequestered hamlets which the rail-road now dispenses so rapidly. Three fine steamers for the transmission of passengers to the eastern terminus of the road at Piermont are provided, one of which is designed for winter use, when the river is frozen. Besides these, the company runs a milk-boat, employed in bringing down to New York the lacteal supplies from the region to which the Erie Rail-way is now the only outlet. This staple is brought to New York at midnight, and at day break those myriad cans "pair off," and are seen flanking the young

Jehus that fly through the streets of Gotham in light wagons, calling out, with their unearthly shrieks, red-elbowed house-maids to receive their daily allowance from those huge urns. Our own boat, you perceive, has her forecastle piled up with the discharged cans, that now are tossed about and battered, though this very night,



as they descend *full* again, each will enjoy the reserved right of every tub or other vessel "to stand on its own bottom." At present they look as useless as empty champaign-bottles. But we are off from the pier, on our way up stream.

We have heard much of the absurdity of the Erie Railroad terminating so far up the Hudson, and not at Jersey City or Hoboken; but, whatever be the inconvenience, delay, or unpleasantness of the sail to Piermont during winter, commend us to this same voyage on a bright summer morning, when we



are refreshed by the cool puffs of the river air, amused with the ever-animated scenes on its surface, and then descend with a will and appetite to a comfortable breakfast. A cigar and the morning papers having succeeded that hearty meal, we promenade

the deck, and stare for the thousandth time at the basaltic wonder of the Palisades, then at the opposite wonder of Mr. Forest's castle, with its heavy "box entrance," and, just as we begin to weary with the sail, lo! before us the broad basin of the Tappan Zee, on the west side of which runs, far out into the

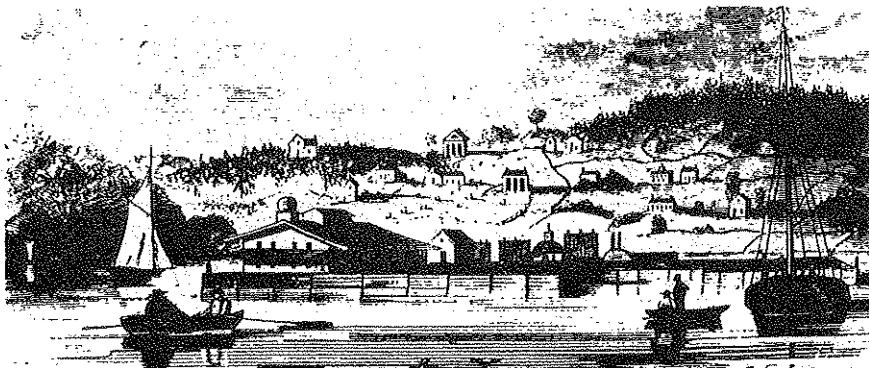
blue tide, the bright yellow line of the *Pier* that gives th name to the point where we tak the rail for the West. The distance of this point from Ne York is 24 miles. The view of Piermont and its pier from the river is very beautiful. Over the long, flat extent of the latter, with its freight-house trains, and crowds of passenge and workmen, the village makes

a pretty show, while the steep heights above are dotted with prett cottages, amid gardens and cedar-groves. To the left the hill-sides slope suddenly into a glen, up whic lies the course of the New York and Erie Railroad. The left side of this valley presents a beautiful wooded hill, descending to the wide yellow, marshy flats extending far out into the river south of the pier. Nature seems to have selecte this point for an ingress through the steep sides of the Hudson to th country beyond, for the long, pil-lared wall of the Palisades here suddenly sinks into a ravine of gentle slope, to swell again abruptly into a mountainous range, that assume a grander form in the bold Nyack hills to the north of Piermont.

The pier we have now gained affords a sample of the vast extent and costliness of the New York and Erie Railroad. Extending one mile in length, it presents a general width of 50 feet, expanding, at its river extremity, into a fine front 300 feet wide, within which there is a spacious basin or dock, affording safe accommodation for the company's boats. A large wooden depot for cars, stores, and freight stands at

their extremity, and under its projecting eaves the trains receive their passengers and goods. The surface of this vast pier is cut up with tracks and "switches" without number, along whose iron veins circulates unceasingly the noisy life-blood of a great rail-way depot. The cost of the pier has been large, for not only is its causeway *made* ground, but also the wide area at its base, which has been *filled in* for the erection of the offices, workshops, and stations where we now stop. Arrangements having been made by the company by which passengers to and from the West take the shorter route through New Jersey, this vast depot ground, with its buildings, will be devoted almost exclusively to the accommodation of the immense freighting business of the road.

Here we can form some idea of the energy and enterprise of the company in establishing a spacious depot at Piermont, where otherwise was not room for a single track to run along the steep river-shore. On the north side of the area are workshops. These may be considered the *stables* and *stud* that supplies the high-way before us with its iron steeds; and a few items about their extent may not



be tiresome to those curious in the statistics of such a road. Persons are constantly exclaiming about the wonders of a rail-road. Let them enter its workshops, and see the "mighty heart" whose pulsations cause the long track to beat in healthy order through a distance of 450 miles! For this reason, fellow-traveler, hear some items of the economy of Vulcan's head-quarters at Piermont.

For the whole extent of the Erie

road, including its branches, there are used at present over 100 engines; keeping in employ more than 350 men and 40 furnaces. There are about seventy employed in the machine department, in which every thing pertaining to the steam-engine can be made and repaired. In the car-shop there is a force of about eighty men; that last year, in addition to all the repairs, turned out 200 freight baggage, and passenger cars, the upholstery and painting of which were also done by hands employed here. In addition to these, there are the engine-houses, with room for 28 engines. Ritchie has well said that "the movements of a great rail-way require to be governed with as much precision as those of a great army; and truly, an examination of the head-quarters at Piermont, inside and out, will show the grand scale of the operations that regulate the marching and counter-marching on the Erie road. With these matter-of-fact details we will "lump" a few others about the track itself that may be interesting. The New York and Erie Railroad has a track of fine width of what is called the *six feet gauge*, considered the best and safest of all others. The T rail is used through its entire length, and weighs about 55 to 60 pounds to the yard. These together give a remarkably easy and steady motion to the cars, while the wide gauge affords ample room for luxurious accommodations for passengers.

We will now quit the dingy precincts of Vulcan and take a look at PIERMONT (from the pier one mile). The embankment on which the station stands divides the prettily-situated village into two parts. That to the north of us is the main business street, facing the workshops, and showing along its entire length neat stores, dwelling a church, and a large hotel, that gives it an air of dignity and importance. Above rise the steep mountains, up which, as we have said, are scattered beautiful cottages,

with now and then an elegant mansion among trees. Many of these *up-town* dwellings are occupied during summer by city folks, that find Piermont a pleasant and convenient resort. South of the station, the village is built along the Sparkill, a small creek issuing from the valley we are soon to enter. The dwellings further up the stream are very neat and tasty having small gardens around them. Beyond these, scattered over the yellow, marshy "flats," are numerous Irish shanties, the fast-disappearing types of what Piermont altogether was a few years ago, when it figured in the Gazetteer as a "fishing village, with considerable trade, supporting *three sloops!*" Tappan Slote was then its title—slote being, we believe, the Dutch for *ditch*, and applied to the pretty stream now called the *Sparkill*. Indeed, such squalid hovels, only two years since, offended the eye in the midst of the new and *fashionable* part of the village. Now look at the wonderful change wrought in this "fishing village" by the beneficent power of steam! The "nets" of its former "traders" are now represented by the mazy *net-work* of iron tracks upon that pier, and for the "three sloops" are substituted as many steam-boats, to say nothing of the *land-steamers* running up and down that long track, like jockies trying their steeds on a training-course. The population is estimated at over one thousand. The visitor will find it well worth his while to ascend the heights above the village, and enjoy the prospects they afford. The most striking of these is the map-like view of the station and pier, which last looks as though it ran half-way across the river. Opposite is Mr. Paulding's residence at Tarrytown, and Washington Irving's country seat. The broad, placid sheet of the Hudson contrasts singularly with the noisy hive and artificial lines of the station, while on the right, just beneath us, winds the sinuous Sparkill among its grassy meadows. But listen how the "*Knickerbocker*" thus felicitously hits off the sights and sounds of Piermont, after describing

the bright shores opposite: "Hark! the shriek of the steam-whistle and its white breath brings us to the foreground, and we look down upon long, snaky trains of freight-cars, gliding amid a labyrinth of iron tracks, and preceded by a puffing locomotive, that often requires the application of "*a switch*" to keep it in the proper track; upon groups and clusters of brick structures (some of them in the *pointed Ionic* style of architecture); upon half a mile of new cars and an acre of car-wheels; upon the smoke of Stygian forges, whence comes up also "the clink of hammers closing rivet up," the slow, grinding noise of iron planes driven by steam-engines and upon ditchers "laying pipe" with as little regard for the consequence of his labor as any politician that ever performed the same labor before them!

Northward we have a superb view of the Nyack hills, and the fine curve of the river between them and Piermont, making it much resemble the Bay of Naples. The view, also, looking westward, embraces a vast landscape, through which our road passes, and on its furthest verge we may see the *Ramapo Gap*, a very remarkable notch in the mountains of that valley, 17 miles distant.

The country around Piermont is full of historical interest associated with the Revolution. Directly opposite, and near Tarrytown, is the spot where Major Andre was arrested by the three militia-men; and at Tappan, a village three miles south of Piermont, was the scene of his execution. His grave is still pointed out, but in 1831 the body was taken to England, and deposited in Westminster Abbey. In a work descriptive of this state, published by the New York Historical Society in 1841, there is a very interesting account of the exhumation, and also of Andre's execution, as described by an *eye-witness*.

Our road leaves Piermont by a southwesterly curve round some heavy rock-cutting, and then turning westward, we ascend the valley of the

Sparkill by a grade of sixty feet to the mile. This grade is necessary to attain the country beyond, and extends with occasional levels and descents, twelve and a half miles, to Monsey. As we enter the valley near Piermont, we have a beautiful view of the Sparkill and the neat cottages lining its banks, each with its little garden, that speaks so well the happy condition of its occupant. These are the snug abodes of the artisans in the workshops, and it is gratifying to think those sons of Vulcan have such pleasant retreats from the smoke, noise, and labor of the day. Very soon, however, this fair part of the valley, with the broad Hudson and the noisy village, are lost to sight, and we emerge upon an open country of poor soil, but abounding in orchards. A double track is laid upon this portion of the road, extending from Piermont to Clarkstown.

### PIERMONT WINS H.U.D. FUNDING

The U.S. Housing and Urban Development Agency (H.U.D.) has awarded Piermont a grant of \$100,000 to rebuild the sewer line running under Piermont Avenue on the north side of the Sparkill Creek. The old line has deteriorated badly, allowing wastes to leak from the sewer into the creek. It is suspected that, during rainstorms, water percolates into the sewer line, overloading the sanitary system with ground water. The H.U.D. funds will pay the entire cost of rebuilding the old sewer line, which runs from the traffic light near the new church to the bridge at the silk mill.

Piermont's grant comes from H.U.D.'s discretionary funds, which are allotted by quotas within census districts. In all, only \$54 million was available for the entire nation this year. Piermont's district consists of New York City, and Rockland, Westchester, and Putnam Counties. A total of only \$360,000 was allotted for this enormous region. Piermont will receive more than 25% of the amount available to the district this year. This amazing outcome is largely due to the courage and determination of Piermont's Trustees and Mayor. Work on the application was

not confined to a special committee of the Board, but was the responsibility of the entire group. Nevertheless, special thanks are due to Trustee Tom DeRaffele, who acted as liaison between the Board and H.U.D.

The first necessary step was taken in January 1975, when Piermont's Board of Trustees unanimously voted to opt out of Rockland County's federally funded Community Development Program, in order to apply separately for the discretionary funds. Last year, Rockland County received \$450,000 in Community Development funds, and this year could receive \$1 million. The Board felt that Piermont, with less than 1% of the county's population, would not receive meaningful help from the county.

H.U.D.'s application process is somewhat involved. An applicant must first file a preliminary application, and then files a more detailed final application. Piermont's preliminary application presented a three-year plan, as required. The plan included the sewer project, a new gym floor, an in-ground swimming pool, acquisition of land for a waterfront park, work on the outdoor basketball courts, and other projects. Two public hearings were held. H.U.D. notified the Village that no funds at all were available.

After Congress passed a new appropriation providing \$54 million in discretionary funds for H.U.D. Piermont reapplied. This time, the Village was advised by H.U.D. that its application would not be accepted, and that it should not bother filing its final application.

Nevertheless, the Board persisted. H.U.D.'s criteria for granting funds were clear by now: the two most important points were that the project be urgently needed to protect the public health and safety, and that the project could be completed with one year's funding. The sewer line seemed



to it perfectly. A final application was written, requesting first-year funding only for the sewer line. All other projects were put off into the future. H.U.D. gave Piermont its approval this January. Funding will begin after an Environmental Impact Statement is completed and accepted. The actual work should begin this summer.

## PIERMONT TO ELECT TWO TRUSTEES

Incumbent Democratic Trustees Marge Spring and Frank Parelli are running unopposed in the Village election March 16.

Marge Spring is running for her first full term, having been elected last year to fill the remaining year of an unexpired term. Marge has been responsible for the Village recreational programs, including the Teen Center and summer activities. Active in civic affairs, Marge volunteers her time at the library and for the Board of the PCA. Her hard work and willing spirit has helped to make many a Village event a success. She is currently studying for a Master of Science degree in Historical Preservation at the Columbia University School of Architecture, a degree she feels will aid her as a Trustee.

Frank Parelli is running for his second term as Trustee. During his first term he served as Deputy Mayor the first year and Fire Commissioner the second. Frank is now retired from the paper company where he was also Treasurer of the union. A resident of Piermont for almost 50 years, Frank served with the Fire Department for over 25, and has been active within the Democratic Committee for 14. His goals for his second term include looking out for the interests of the senior citizens through possible tax rebates and recreational programs. He also feels that the time has come for the Village to invest in a new fire truck.

Remember, both districts now vote at the Village Hall, March 16, 12 to 9 p.m.

V O T E !

## BUSINESS NOTES

Ginny Johnson at The Clausland Bookshop has news of another book of poems by Horace Gregory coming along soon—"Another Look." She also will have in her shop from March 6 to March 27, an exhibition of the original engravings of the Hudson River prints by N.T. Willis Esq. from W.H. Bartlett's book "American Scenery." Also in the spring, a show of lithographs by Arthur B. Davies.

The Tin Man up the street is still pretty well camouflaged, but window signs and things indicate that custom weather vanes are *IN*. Lenny Hunt will design a fish, a bird or whatever in copper, brass, or iron and set it spinning just right on top of your house to tell with a beautiful gesture what is going on with the weather.

Spring has arrived at Mardy Allen's gift and flower shop with flurries of silk and dried flowers miniature and hanging basket arrangements and bouquets, and flower prints. For Easter, custom-painted eggs. Order early and she will decorate eggs with your favorite flower, friend's name or easter motif to make them your very own.

Tomdia's Garden Boutique is now open five days a week, Wednesday through Friday from 12 to 5 when Juanelle Jones is in charge, Saturday and Sunday from 11 to 6 when Diana Davis is there with her hundreds of varieties of beautiful green and flowering plants, hanging baskets, etc. to choose from.

There is a new owner at Burd House Antiques who was not in when this reporter made her rounds, but he has a great collection of Tiffany Lamps in the shop and more pieces arrive each day—furniture and objects that look very exciting.

It's been "discovered" by the New York Times and New York Magazi. It's the place to go for fine handloomed bags, scarves, pillows, bel and rugs. It's croissants baked in Piermont, flashfrozen swordfish and tiny bay scallops flown directly from Martha's Vineyard...natural sponge

from Greece, baskets from Vermont and nursery mice from England. And it's all right here in our own front yard at 516 Piermont Avenue. The Piermont Exchange, a member of the Federation of Women's Exchanges, has been serving the community for 15 months as a marketplace for handicrafts. Two-thirds of the merchandise selling price is returned to the consignee; the other third is used by the shop for operating expenses and other projects. Currently, the Exchange is meeting a 3-year \$3000 pledge to the Rockland County Historical Society Building Fund. The shop is staffed by dedicated, hardworking volunteers plus a paid manager-bookkeeper.

Merchandise at the Exchange is ever-changing, eclectic and appealing. Just consider: clothespin soldiers handpainted in authentic regimental colors of the Continental Army; handknitted finger puppets; Helen Davis Norman's irresistible doll-houses. Long-time Piermont resident Frank McCormick's beautiful and utilitarian wooden household accessories; June Griesbach's gorillas; denim carpenter aprons, hand-decorated with Ken Clements' Bicentennial emblem...

The Piermont Exchange is open Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 - 5:00, and Sunday, 1:00 - 5:00. You are invited to attend demonstrations of colonial crafts held in the shop on the last Saturday of each month, 1:00 - 3:00.

## DIPLOMAT MALL TO BECOME APARTMENTS

Citing low occupancy of the shopping mall, Piermont Green Realty Co. successfully petitioned the Village Board for a variance to permit construction of sixteen apartments in place of the presently existing stores facing 9W.

Plans for the conversion have been submitted to the Board and to the building department. Construction has already begun and by the terms of the agreement, must be completed within 18 months.

Dominick's Pizza Restaurant and the Torpid Deli will remain as commercial occupants. An escrow account

has been established to insure the uniform conversion of all stores if and when they are all vacated. Happily we note that the Board has included a provision in the agreement for the planting of suitable ground cover in the area between the now existing parking lot and 9W. This area now is an eyesore—it has become a catch-all for litter. We hope that when proper landscaping is completed the management will also make provision for its maintenance.

## PCA TO HOLD 2ND ANNUAL BLUEGRASS PICNIC

Buoyed by the success of last year's picnic the PCA will again sponsor this Memorial Day event. Live Blue Grass Music will highlight the afternoon, beginning right after the parade, at Kane Park. In case of rain it will be held at the Village Hall. Community groups and individuals are encouraged to join us and set up tables at the picnic to sell food, plants, antiques or whatever. \$10.00 is requested for a table to defray the cost of the band, but the profits are all yours. Contact Bob Cone for further information.

## SOUTH ORANGETOWN SCHOOL BOARD HOLDS BUDGET INPUT MEETING

Despite a snow-and-ice storm that closed down most of the county, South Orangetown School Board went ahead with its community-input budget meeting on Monday, February 2. The 40 hardy souls who had defied the elements to show up, protested that holding the meeting on such a bad night kept many people from contributing their views. Board President Leroy Holmes indicated later meeting would be held. The board had publicized the meeting as an opportunity for the community to tell the board what it wanted kept in or taken out of the 1976-7 school budget, and had insisted it would not answer any questions or give out any facts at this time.

Before the meeting, board member and new Superintendent Dr. Vincent Gillen had said they wanted to hear



from the "Silent Majority" and not just the "vested interest groups" who always show up to press for their favorite programs. Among the "vested interests" were the PTA and supporters of the art, music, Learning Disability and athletic programs, many of whom fear that these areas will be drastically cut in any budget-shaving attempts.

To judge by the audience comments, the "Silent Majority" remained silent. The board was repeatedly urged to preserve the educational program, especially in Learning Disabilities and Music, and to reinstate the library services cut in last year's budget. Taking note of the rough economy and state aid picture, TZE-PTA President John Zahn asked that necessary cuts be made wherever possible in areas that do not affect the educational program or the children.

Several speakers urged the board to seek more meaningful community input by giving out advance information on program costs and aid figures before asking the community for its priorities. It was suggested that the board set up community budget advisory committees similar to those in Pearl River, Clarkstown, or East Ramapo, which would help to construct a budget and work to pass it at the May election. In response, Holmes said there would be more budget meetings and some information would go out, but he refused to be more specific.

During the meeting, TZE came in for several unsolicited compliments when the staff and the community volunteers who run the Clubs and the One-to-One Tutoring Programs were cited as examples of how a school and community can work together to provide a good educational experience, even in tough times.

## PCA ELECTS OFFICERS

The first PCA meeting of 1976 was held at the library on February 19. New officers and board members were elected. They are: President, Carole Novick; Vice-President, Ken Barnes, and Secretary-Treasurer, Maggie Voorhees. Members of the board are Mildred Burck, Helen Norman, Marge Spring, Bob Bradbury and Bob Cone.

President Carole Novick outlined a

variety of community projects the PCA might take up in 1976. Members were enthusiastic in their support and it is hoped that progress can be made toward all of them:

- 1--Improvements to the Village Hall: The PCA goal is to improve the acoustics and to purchase a new stage curtain. Bob Bradbury has volunteered to investigate the task of the acoustical improvement while Ann Rothchild is pricing the curtain. Through additional fund-raising events, donations and volunteers, we hope to complete this task in 1976.
- 2--The planting of two trees on the east side of Main Street is planned. Lenny Hunt is in charge of this effort. Please contact him if you can help.
- 3--Construction of two benches to be placed on the "old railroad right-of-way" is planned. Bo diFrancesca has volunteered to mastermind this project. They will be made of cement and wood. Anyone interested in helping, please contact Bo.

Safety on 9W continues to be an issue of concern with the PCA. Meetings held with the state D.O.T. have brought some improvements. A school speed zone, limiting speeds to 30 mph in front of TZE has been authorized during the morning and evening school commuting hours. A flashing beacon requested by the PCA will be installed if funds for its installation and maintenance can be found. The PCA plans a visit to the Orangetown Town Board meeting on March 8 to demand the allocation of the necessary funds from available revenue-sharing monies. The existing passing zone in front of TZE will be eliminated on a trial basis. We feel this must be permanent.

With the dramatic increase in traffic on 9W, especially trucks, we feel these safety measures are imperative to the well-being of the children attending TZE. We invite all concerned parents, PTA members, and citizens to join us in our demands for proper safety.



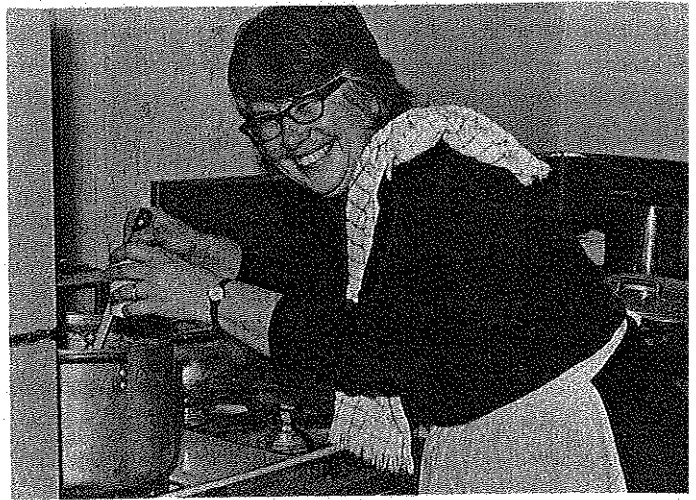
## BICENTENNIAL DINNER

January 24th was the night of Piermont's official Bicentennial Dinner and the first in a whole series of events this year on our Bicentennial calendar.

The Village Hall looked lovely, lit by candles, hung with paintings and photographs and set up with long tables with green and white tablecloths.

An 18th century menu—which was served to an overflowing crowd—included fish chowder, potted beef, minted peas and indian pudding. The food was cooked by Piermonters and served up with beer and cider. The only mishap—and no doubt this was a common one in the 18th century too—was that the great pot of fish chowder mysteriously spoiled and at the last minute unauthentic Campbell's alphabet soup had to be served instead.

The Tappan Zee High School Madrigal Singers, dressed in 18th century costume, joined us at our feast and afterwards sang most beautifully for everyone's entertainment.



*Mimi Bryan gives a last-minute stir to the pot at the Bicentennial Dinner.*

## BICENTENNIAL CALENDAR

March 27—"Down Memory Lane" Buffet dinner sponsored by the Catholic Daughters and the Knights of Columbus. \$4.00 per person; 7:30 at the Village Hall.

April 10—"Las Vegas Night" and Buffet sponsored by the Empire Hose Co. 8:00 at the Piermont Fire Hall \$2.00 per person. For reservations call Lawrence Goswick, 359-2572, Ed Scott, 359-2379 or Howard Brawner, 359-2515.

*Bicentennial Worship Services:*  
April 25—St. John's Catholic Church  
3:00 p.m.

May 2—Macedonia Baptist Church  
3:00 p.m.

May 9—Piermont Reform Church  
3:00 p.m.

May 29—VFW Military Ball, Billy Kile's orchestra and buffet, at the Piermont Village Hall.

May 30—Annual Fireman's Memorial Service to honor the deceased members of the Empire Hose Co. All villagers are invited to worship at the church of their choice and then to join the firemen at the fire house for a special ceremony at 12:30.

May 31—Memorial Day Parade, 10:00 a.m. on Main Street. Second Annual Blue Grass Picnic to be held following the parade at Kane Park, 11:00 a.m. Live Blue Grass music, food, antiques.

June 6—Donkey Baseball and Field Day, T-Shirt League field.



*Christmas window display featured toys of "grandma's Christmases" and a satin and lace party-dress dating from 1900.*

## BICENTENNIAL CALENDAR *(continued...)*

June 27—Strawberry Festival sponsored by the Village Board. Kane Park, 7:00 p.m. (Rain site, Village Hall).

## WINDOW DRESSING

Sparked by the hard work and enthusiasm of Ruth and Howard Brawner, co-chairmen of the Bicentennial Commission, Piermont's celebration of the Bicentennial is active, colorful and fun.

A leisurely stroll on Main Street brings with it a pocket history of Piermont. Period window displays have been gracing the windows of the Montesano building. The displays have been designed, gathered together, and put up by Ruth Brawner, Lucile Laury,

Marty McQueen, Josephine Komornick and Marilyn Schied. The windows are frequently changed and have included a 70-year-old christening outfit, a display of old tools and kitchen items, and Erie Railroad memorabilia including vintage model trains. All the historic items have been gleaned from local collectors and family heirlooms.

The Montesano windows are not the only historical bright-spot on Main Street. Periodic historical and informational displays are also to be found in the windows of the barber shop—pictures and trophies of the Empire Hose Fire Company—Otto's service station—illustrations of vintage cars—and a map of Piermont as it was in 1854 on the wall of Dick Clucas's office.

## RESIDENTS DEMAND ENFORCEMENT OF TRAFFIC LAWS

At a public meeting held February 13th at Orangetown Town Hall, dissatisfied residents told of flagrant violations of traffic laws by trucks using 9W, 340, Oak Tree Road and Closter Road. Excessive truck noise and speed, tailgating, smoking while transporting flammable materials, running red lights and general recklessness and disregard for traffic safety were cited. A citizen study of recent summonses given to trucks, showed that only 2, for an estimated 75,000 trucks using these roads per month, were given out.

Walter Butler, Chairman of the West Hudson Environmental Association, presented Supervisor Joe Colello with a petition requesting improved police enforcement of traffic laws concerning trucks on 9W, 340, Oak Tree and Closter Roads. Supervisor Colello promised to come up with a plan for improvement on March 15, when he will again meet with the group. All interested citizens are urged to attend this meeting at Orangetown Town Hall, 8:00 p.m.

## HIDDEN GOLD

It would appear that a golden opportunity to give PCA finances a boost is being overlooked. A check of the Tappan Zee Thrift Shop 1975 annual report shows the PCA ranking extremely low among the 10 participating organizations in both donations and shop-hours volunteered. When you consider that since it was founded in Piermont in December 1966, the Thrift Shop has dispersed approximately \$46,000 to its member organizations, and the PCA's 1975 share of that amount was roughly \$600, you can see what we mean.

What does the PCA do with its funds? This Newsletter is our prime expense: approximately \$400 four times yearly, totalling \$1,600. We also like to maintain a sufficiently comfortable bank account to enable us to contribute easily to causes and civic projects deemed important by our membership.

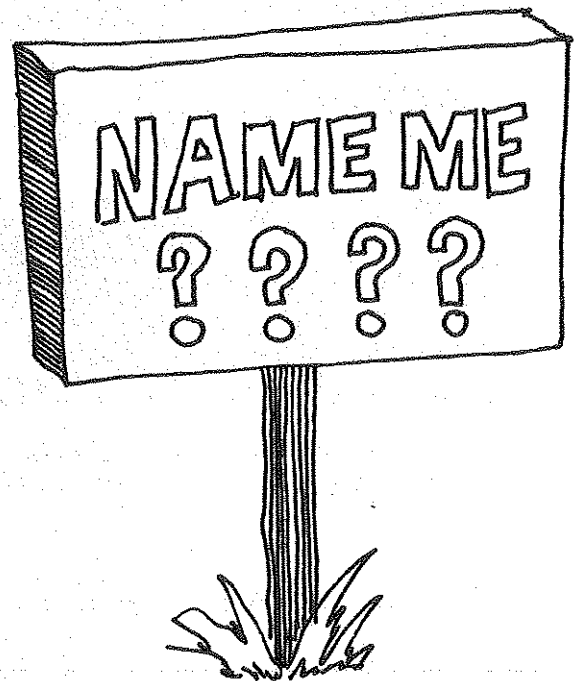
Where do our funds come from? Primarily from our \$5.00 annual

dues (plus discretionary contributions) with additional small sums earned by our annual dinner and Memorial Day picnic.

So how about remembering the Thrift Shop as spring-cleaning time rolls around--and make those merchandise contributions in the PCA's name. (If time is what you have in surplus, volunteer hours.) The Tappan Thrift Shop, Main Street, Piermont, is open Tuesday, Thursday Saturday 10-4, with donations accepted until 3:30.

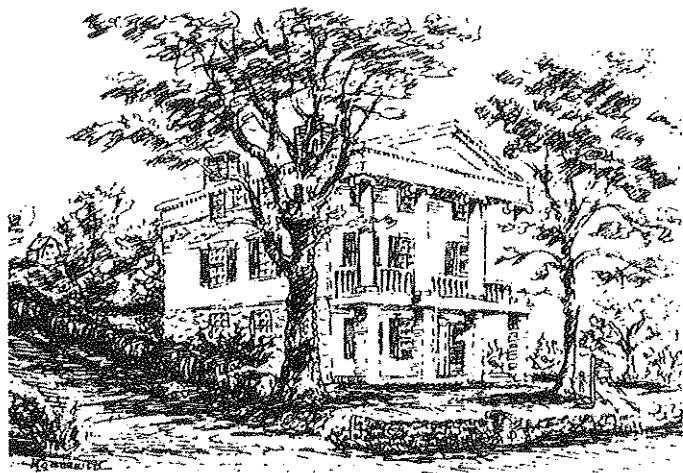
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## PCA SPONSORS CONTEST TO NAME NEW VILLAGE PARK



Although it's been called the "right-of-way" for a long time, with the change of its status to a Village Park, we think a proper name is in order. Historical, descriptive or commemorative are all appropriate kinds of names. Send your suggestion to Editor, PCA Newsletter, by April 15. The name will be voted on at the next PCA meeting to be held in late April...and will then be submitted to the Mayor and Village Board for their final approval. Public announcement of the name and awarding of the prize will be made at the Blue Grass Memorial Day Picnic.





attend.

April is Earth Month at the Library and there will be a special display of the environment. Our Librarian, Grace Meyer, is active on the Environmental Committee in Piermont and always has fascinating books to suggest to an interested reader.

The special Tuesday Evening Film Showings (part of a county-wide program which is sponsored with the help of the New York State Council on the Arts) will continue throughout the spring at the Piermont Library. Look for these great films to come—8:00 p.m. is curtain time:

March 2—The Innocents (a dramatization of Henry James's The Turn of the Screw)

March 16—The Grapes of Wrath (John Steinbeck's classic)

April 6—All About Eve, starring Bette Davis and George Saunders

April 20—How Green Was My Valley (one of director John Ford's greatest films)

May 4—Sons and Lovers (based on the novel by D.H. Lawrence)

May 18—The Three Faces of Eve (Joanne Woodward in a portrayal of a woman with three personalities)

Regular Library story-hours for pre-school children are presented every Tuesday morning at 10:30 by Paula Scholz, Children's Librarian. Coffee is provided for mothers. On Tuesday afternoons, films for elementary school children are scheduled every week at 3:45. For listings, consult the school bulletin or the bulletin boards at the Library and Post Office.

In his letter dated February 14, Library Board President Davis Crippen asked Piermonters to contribute a "financial Valentine" to help the Library with its programs. The listing for these few months alone shows that the activities of the Piermont Library, from book-lending to film-watching, and all the projects in between, enrich the life of the community. It's not too late to send your valentine—show that you care.

Colonial Crafts Day on January 31st marked the end of the first month of the Library's Bicentennial activities. 50 to 60 children had fun baking bread with Linda Baker, learning to dip candles with Honey Dickson and to stitch a sampler with Mayra Bloom. In another Bicentennial project, 20 squares have been completed on the Library-sponsored Bicentennial Quilt, with 10 more to be finished. When they are all ready, the quilt will be set up on a frame at the Village Hall, where there is more space to spread out, and the actual quilting will begin—probably in March. If you are interested in working on this project, call Grace Meyer at the Library (359-4595) for information.

The exhibit of photography from the Tappan Zee High School Photography Club, which was held in the Upstairs Gallery in February, was the first display the club had mounted outside the school. Kathy Zahn, Photo Club member from Piermont, arranged for the show which will move to the Blauvelt Library in April.

Iceland is the subject of the March display in the gallery, featuring photographs, crafts and artifacts from the collections of several Piermont families and books from the Library collection. Michael Spring will show his slides of Iceland in an evening program at the Library on Thursday, March 4th at 8:00 p.m. There is no



This column is the first of a regular series on the environment and ecology of Piermont and the surrounding area. It is sponsored by the Piermont Environmental Advisory Commission: Chairwoman, Grace Meyer, Tony Amos, Bob Cone, John Deans, June Griesbach, Leonard Hunt, Stan Jacobs, and Dick Janda. The Commission meets at the Library the third Wednesday of every month; the public is most welcome.

RESOURCE RECYCLING has become increasingly important due to the dwindling of natural resources, the built-in obsolescence of many products, the necessity of energy conservation and the rising cost of materials, among other reasons. We in this community can help in recycling some of our resources.

1—Paper: The Ladies Auxiliary of the Empire Hose Company #1 will collect all your newspapers, magazines, and other clean paper on the last Saturday of each month. Have them bundled and ready at the curb by 10:00 a.m. At other times, paper can be brought to the large yellow bins behind the Shell station on Main Street. The Company pays the Village for these papers, which benefits you and me instead of costing us money to send them up in smoke.

2—Glass: Bring your clear and green glass to Glenshaw Glassworks on Rt. 303, Orangeburg, every Saturday morning from 8:30-1:30. They pay 1¢/pound. Green and clear glass must be separated, and metal caps and rings and styrofoam covers must be removed.

3—Organic Waste: Make a compost pile! Fertilize your soil for free.

"Compost is the basic tool of organic gardening, and is the natural step in the biological cycle between dead or unused organic matter and growing plants. It returns to the ground the nutrients removed during plant growth and maintains the tilth of the soil. Compost is the most complete and revitalizing and the

least expensive form of soil additive a garden can receive.

"The production of compost is very easy and can be carried out on various levels of sophistication and time-space-energy requirements. The simplest approach is the heap. One simply piles—preferably in layers—straw, weeds, or lawn clippings; manure and pet deposits; kitchen refuse; seaweed (preferably with the salt washed off); and any other organic material available.

"The bin is preferable to the heap because it keeps out dogs and provides better exposure of the decaying materials to air. This means that both aerobic and anaerobic bacteria can be at work, causing faster decomposition and eliminating any odors. (If a layer of grass clippings and/or soil is kept on the top of the pile and odoriferous materials are sunk in below this layer, odor isn't much of a problem anyway.) Compost bins can easily be constructed of rocks, stone or broken bricks, leaving spaces for air to enter. Or you can simply sink four corner-posts and stretch picket fencing or poultry wire around them to form the sides. You may want to construct a more elaborate wooden bin with slotted sides, including perhaps a drainage system whereby you can retrieve water which has percolated down through the pile. The "compost water" is useful for treating sick plants or encouraging young ones to grow faster. If you have very limited yard space, you may want to try a round, metal container that can be partially buried in the ground (e.g., the Bard-Matic Garbage Eliminator or a rusty garbage can). Household vegetable and meat wastes put into this container will provide humus for potted plants and window boxes.

"The amount of time it takes to produce compost, or humus, by any of these methods varies with moisture, season, and the types of materials present in the pile. Usually the compost is ready in three to six months. Addition of such materials as kitchen scraps, pet wastes, and manure speeds up



decomposition because of their relatively high nitrogen content. Occasional turning of the pile also speeds decomposition. The compost pile should be kept about as moist as a damp sponge, which means uncovering it in wet weather, and watering and covering it in very dry weather.

"The smaller the size of the particles of organic matter put in the pile, the faster they will decompose. A shredder is a great help. However, running a rotary lawnmower over small branches and other fibrous materials works fairly well. Place the material to be shredded near a wall so it can be easily retrieved."

from Everyman's Guide to Ecological Living, by G. Caillet, P. Setzer and M. Love.

4—Aluminum: The Owens-Corning Co. in North Bergen, N.J. buys aluminum and amber glass. Collection of these is a great money-making opportunity for some community group, since aluminum brings the highest price of any recycled material.

5—Other Metals: Any information on recycling metals from our readers is welcome.

6—Plastics: Unfortunately, not recycled at present, even though they are made of that precious commodity, petroleum.

With the coming closing of landfills in our area, resource recycling is a positive alternative both economically and ecologically. The above suggestions are partial but important practical solutions.

## NOTES FROM AROUND THE VILLAGE

### Auf Weidersehn

Charles Grutzner will soon be moving from Piermont to Connecticut. He leaves behind many accomplishments and friends. Charlie was most active in Village affairs, both within the PCA and without. He was a frequent contributor to the Newsletter, a key staff member in local election campaigns, and until recently, chairman of the Village Zoning Board of Appeals. The community that gets him will be a

lucky one, and we hope that he will consider Piermont a second home.

### Updating Village Ordinances

The Mayor and the Board of Trustees have been diligently reviewing all the Village ordinances currently on the books. Their purpose is to update the ordinances, drop those that are no longer effectual and add some that are needed. All minor civil ordinances have been reviewed and they are now working on fire code and zoning ordinances. When this momentous task is finished, a summary and abstract will be published and public hearings will be held before ratification.

### Trash Barrels on the Pier

Through the efforts of Mayor Bryan trash barrels have now been placed on the pier. The barrels will be emptied by the Piermont Sanitation Department. The barrels are spaced along the length of the pier. The problem of litter on the pier has been a nagging one. Let's hope that with a proper place to dispose of trash on the pier, those who used to toss that beer can under the trees will now toss it into the trash barrel.

### Two Appointed to Zoning Board

William Stafford and George Flobec have been named to serve on the Piermont Zoning Board of Appeals. Active in Village affairs, both men bring community experience to their new positions.

### Community Development Grant 1976-7

Encouraged by their successful application in 1975, the Mayor and Village Board are already hard at work preparing a request for funding for 1976-77. Several open meetings have been held to encourage community input. Projects outlined in the grant application include: acquisition of a piece of waterfront property, rehabilitation of the tennis court and community center, including the paths and walls, request for funds to construct a new swimming pool where swimming and water safety courses could be taught, and plans for access ramps for the handicapped to Village Hall.

## Compliments of the Chef



Sadie Clements has happily agreed to share with us some recipes handed down through her Greek family. Sadie's mother Metamorphia, was born in Ordu, Turkey, and her people were known as "Ancient Greeks," Greek descendants left after the many wars involving the two countries. The recipes below reflect her Greek-Turkish origin.

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**HOMINY SOUP...**A peasant soup that can also be made with swiss chard or black cabbage in place of the hominy.

Heat 3 cans hominy (14½ oz.), 2 cans water (14½ oz.), salt and pepper to taste for 10 minutes in saucepan. While hominy-water is cooking, sauté until very brown, 1 cup chopped yellow onions in 2 tbs. vegetable oil & 2 tbs. butter in frying pan. Add (2 tbs. flour mixed with ¼ cup cold water) to the hot hominy-water while still on the burner and cook another 10 minutes. Take saucepan off burner and add 2 to 3 cups yogurt to hominy, stirring until blended and then add browned onions to soup. Serve chilled or at room temperature. The longer the soup is kept, the more "sour" (tastier to some) it becomes.

**MOTHER'S WALNUT CAKE...**A rich and delightful cake.

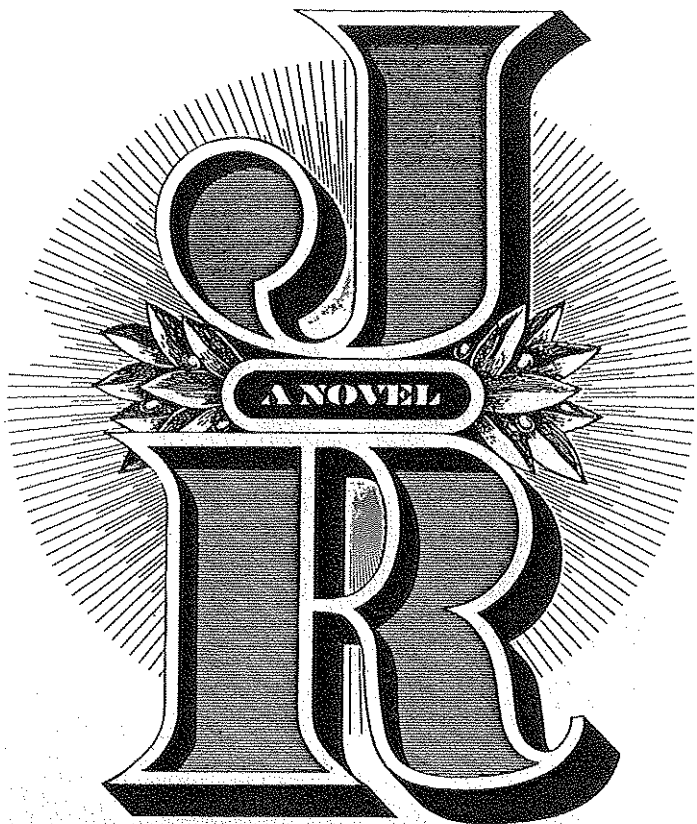
Beat until well beaten: 12 egg whites with 5 to 8 tbs. sugar (beat

as for meringue). Using the same electric beaters, beat 12 egg yolks with 5 to 8 tbs. sugar until well mixed. Add well-beaten ½ lb. sweet butter to egg-yolk mixture. Fold gently the egg-yolk/butter mixture into the egg-white bowl (large), and while folding, add 2 to 3 tps. baking powder. Next add 14 oz. farina (regular, not instant type), 1 cup chopped walnuts, and ½ tps. almond flavoring. Bake at 350°, 35-40 min in ungreased pan (17/11½/2¼). When cake is done, turn off oven, pour syrup\* over entire surface of cake pan and let stay in oven (covered with dish towel) until the next day when it will be frosted. Cover cake with frosting\*\*, cut into diamond shapes, and add halved cherry

\*Syrup (cooks while cake is being made and baked): Add all these to saucepan, cook gently on top of burner  
 3 cups sugar  
 5 cups water  
 ½ to 1 fresh lemon + fine-chopped  
 ⅓ cup honey peel  
 3 tbs. brandy  
 1 stick cinnamon

\*\*Frosting (for top of cake): Beat 6 egg whites with ½ cup sugar (as for meringue); with same electric beaters beat until fluffy ½ lb. sweet butter. Combine or fold egg whites with butter. Frost entire top of cake and sprinkle over that 1 cup chopped walnuts.

**GRECIAN PARTY CAKES...**Melt 1 lb. sweet butter in saucepan, pour in mixing bowl. Add ¼ cup powdered sugar + 1 egg yolk and cream thoroughly. Add 6 cups sifted flour & ¾-cup of finely chopped walnuts gradually, mixing constantly. Knead vigorously until dough is crumbly but smooth. Pinch off small amounts, form in the palm of your hand, center each with a whole clove. Place on ungreased cookie sheet and bake at 350° until lightly golden brown, about 45 min. Sift powdered sugar into bowl, and when cakes are completely cool, roll in powdered sugar carefully until well-coated. Makes 4 dozen.



*Jeff Voorhees*

Many strange tales have been launched from Piermont in the last two centuries, but none stranger than that of JR, the eleven-year-old tycoon from Long Island and disconcerting hero of the recently published novel, JR, by William Gaddis, resident of Piermont. How did JR come to be? It's a long story.

In 1955, a young author named William Gaddis startled America with his first novel, The Recognitions. After the waves of critical acclaim subsided, the book displayed the preliminary ear-marks of a classic: it disappeared from the local bookstores to lose itself in university libraries and bohemian bookshelves. The few who were lucky enough to read a copy knew that something awesome had happened to American literature. Lamentably, the rest of us went on believing that there was no such thing as a modern American classic.

Meanwhile, Mr. Gaddis moved to Piermont and continued working on his second novel. When JR was finally published last October, it brought

amazement, joy, and consternation to readers around the world. More than a few reviewers were stymied. None knew exactly how to describe JR, but most did their best to praise it. The New York Times Book Review gave it a splendid review and Time Magazine included it among the Five Best Novels of 1975. Further afield, JR was pronounced "an accomplishment of the rarest sort" in St. Louis, "joyous" in Chattanooga, "a monsterpiece" in Miami, "a stunning achievement" in Cleveland, "a bombshell" in Grand Rapids and "brilliantly wrought" in Kansas City. Piermonters will be interested to know that in an article on Mr. Gaddis and JR appearing in the daily paper of Buenos Aires, Piermont was described by the Argentinian journalist as "hidden in the woods ... a town both secret and happy."

Due to its length and unusual style, JR demands more of the reader attention than the average contemporary novel. Most of the book is spoken by its characters. Since the American tongue is not always the fountain of grammatical sense, many of the dialogues and monologues have a fractured, though realistic quality. At the center of all this talk is JR. In his rise to corporate dictatorship, JR is not some romanticized Wall Street child prodigy; he is simply a good boy trying to live up to the ideals set by his culture. Although ambition is the force behind his drive to the top, JR is aided by a hapless young composer and reams of mail-order financial advice. His greatest ally, however, is the moral negligence of his junior high school where his venal infection goes unchecked. (The school principal moonlights as a bank president.) JR's fatal success is so preposterous and yet plausible that we are forced to laugh. Indeed, JR would unleash belly-laughs from cover to cover if it were not for the scary similarity between our world and the world that JR builds up and tears down around him. Eventually, the absurd tragedies surrounding JR become less absurd; they begin to hurt. Belly-laughter courts heartache.

In summarizing my impression of JR, I defer to Alicia Metcalf of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, who wrote, "Gaddis seems to me one of the very finest American writers of this century." I can only add that you have never read anything like JR before.

William and Judith Gaddis have lived for seven years in Piermont, where they cherish their proximity to the Hudson and their involvement in this river community. In addition to valuing his "good neighbors and privacy" here, Mr. Gaddis is particularly fond of the Piermont Library, which his wife Judith helps to support through her volunteer work at the Tappan Zee Thrift Shop, of which she is president. Mr. Gaddis is currently working on yet another book, this time, "something about the civil war."

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## ORGANIZATIONS

### Community Playgroup to Hold Benefit Concert

John Anthony, baritone, will give his second benefit concert for Piermont's Community Playgroup this May. Mr. Anthony, who has sung Leonard Bernstein's Mass at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., is known to many in Rockland through his appearances with the Suburban Symphony. His repertoire ranges through classical, modern, and Black American music. This breadth was demonstrated at his last benefit for the Playgroup, when Mr. Anthony shared the stage with the Haitian Dance Ensemble. This year's benefit performance will feature a special "Salute to Paul Robeson" by Mr. Anthony. All those concert-goers who danced in the aisles last year will undoubtedly wish to come again. The concert will be held at the TZ High auditorium, 8:00 p.m., Saturday, May 8. Tickets are \$4.00, and there are \$2.00 tickets for senior citizens and children up through high-school age. For tickets, call Mrs. Berger at 359-4046, Mrs. Corbin at 359-0498, or Mrs. Paluck at 358-2748.

### Pier Clean-up Scheduled for April 24

The Piermont Environmental Advisory Commission is holding its second annual clean-up of the pier on April 24th at 9:30 a.m. Dress in long sleeves and trousers, boots and gloves and come ready to work. If it is pouring rain—alternate date is April 25. Come! It's fun to see the pier become a place of beauty again. Contact Grace Meyer at the Library for further details.

### Wanted! Community Organization New

Any Piermont community organization who wishes to have its news and plans reported in the Newsletter is cordially invited to do so. Submit your typed news brief to the Editor by May 15 for publication in the June/July Newsletter.

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### FAT MAN'S MISERY

*Florence Ripley Mastin*

Half a century ago  
Tweed Boulevard was a path  
Narrow and green  
Winding between  
Great boulders on the mountain

From Piermont to Nyack, midway  
We came to Fat Man's Misery  
Where rocks rose high  
In the leaf-etched sky  
Making a narrow pass

That was the place that was  
Where we had to wriggle through  
If one were fat  
Well, that was that —  
Fat Man's Misery

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### COPIES...

Of the PCA Directory are on sale at the Clausland Book Shop, The Exchange and the Library.....\$1.00

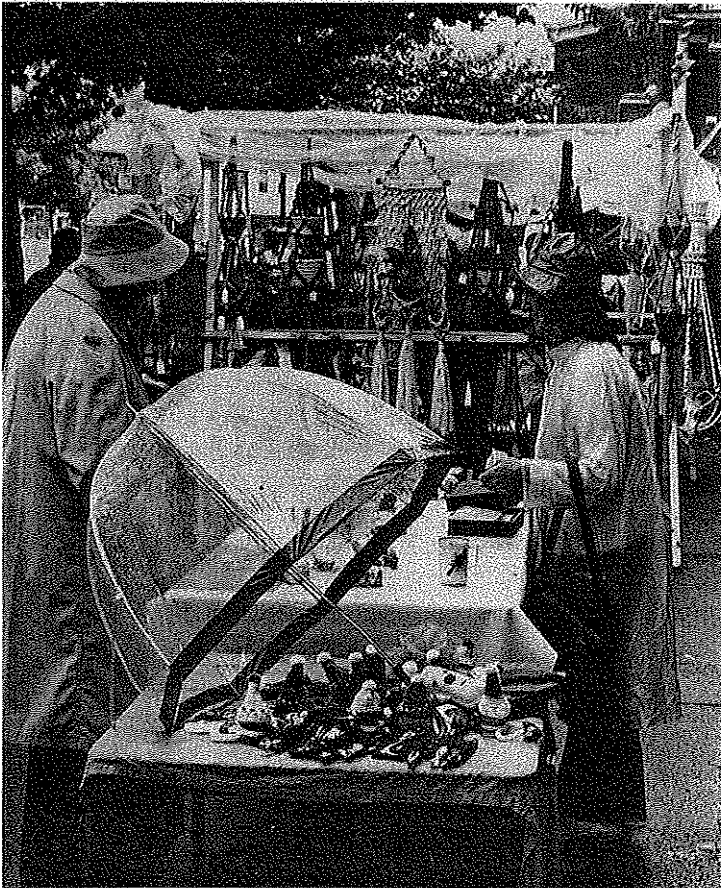


## ANTIQUE FAIR

Remember that rainy day last Fall—we thought we'd never see the sun at Piermont's first Antique Fair held by the Village and sponsored by the Bicentennial Commission. But when the sun shone through it was a glorious day, fun for Piermonters, guests, and local businesses had a real boost.

September 19th is the date set for the Village's second Antique Fair. This year the sponsoring organization will be the PCA. All revenue earned by the PCA will be earmarked for our project to improve the acoustics of the Village Hall and to outfit it with a new stage curtain. These projects will benefit all Piermont, so give the Fair your support.

All community organizations are encouraged to participate again this year with food tables, flea-markets, etc. There is no charge to community groups, so it's a good method of fund raising...plan now—we will notify groups later.





The PCA Newsletter is published for all of Piermont and anyone else who belongs to the PCA. This issue was written by Marty Allen, Mildred Burck, Charles Berger, Sadie Clements, Bob Cone, Cynthia Crippen, Margaret Holihan, Dick Janda, Lisa Merrill, Marge Spring, and Jeff Voorhees. Carole Novick and Lori Joseph, Co-Editors. Photographs by Sally Savage. Typing by Lynn Amos. New contributors to the Newsletter are welcome.

### A REMINDER...

Through the service of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Piermont Fire Department, old newspapers are collected from curbside the last Saturday of every month. Even though the service exists, if you are able, bring the papers yourself to the bins behind the Shell station in downtown Piermont. This advice is from the Fire Department, who wants to lower the fire hazard of all those waste papers, while providing pick-up service to those without cars. The bins are available anytime, day or night.

Piermont Newsletter  
Piermont, New York 10968

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O C C U P A N T

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