

PIERMONT NEWSLETTER

Published by the
Piermont Civic Association

Volume VIII, No. 3

October 1974



The Ming Hole, Piermont on Hudson.

THE MYSTERY OF THE OLD MINE

The Village of Piermont has two historical faces. One is the commercial history that developed along the Sparkill Creek, once known as Tappan Landing, because it was a major artery from the river westward. The other, less often encountered but equally fascinating, is the period when the Village was a recreational town or watering-place. For a time, Piermont was a repository of hotels, casinos, and clubs established here partly because of

the railroad trade and partly because of the Village's attractive setting at the water's edge.

Not much survives of the one-time resort town of Piermont—with one notable exception. That is (or was) the mine-hole on Piermont Avenue, one of the so-called "curiosities of Rockland" a century ago and one of the must-sees of Victorian vacationists. Although the entrance to the hole

or "mine" is now bricked and concreted shut, the aura of the place has survived. The "Mine-Hole" is still the name of the region that surrounds it, and from time to time the name surfaces as in a current promotional brochure that cites Piermont's "roadside cave or mine."

What was (or is) the mine-hole? Historians, as well as scores of living Piermonters, can describe it physically. But nobody with authority can accurately say what it was used for, who dug it, or when. A century ago, the Rockland County Journal described "two passage ways, the one extending in a west, south-west course a distance of 70 feet, the other extending west, bearing rather north, a distance of 40 and 50 feet. These passage ways are cut through the living rock...ranging from 4 to 6 feet in width, and from 3 to 9 feet in height."

At the end of the longest passage was a spring about 18 feet in circumference. Standing by the spring and looking back, the Journal writer of 1855 goes on to say in the lush prose of the period, "the reflection of the light is most beautiful. The whole presents the appearance of being covered with gold; the beads of water which cover the irregular roofing, and trickles down the sides, sparkle with a rich yellowish lustre, recalling to our minds childhood stories of enchanted caverns and of golden genii."

Indeed, gold may have been the reason for the mine's existence, according to David Cole in the "History of Rockland County" (1884). Cole thinks the first settlers in the Piermont area believed it to be gold-bearing. Other authorities believe that lesser minerals were the reason for the mine. These include galena ore, a source of silver and lead, as well as coal, iron, and copper. Still other historians attribute the hole to a vein of sandstone, which may have been intrusive in the basalt that

underlies Piermont. (The Grandview area was rich in sandstone and heavily quarried to provide the brownstone facades of New York City.)

Years later, the mine-hole presented a different aspect. The floor of the tunnel was generally a few inches under water. The spring water was collected in a trough outside the entrance. The water was good—so good that neighbors used it for all their needs. Atop the entrance to the mine was an engraved marble plaque which read

O TRAVELLER

*Stay thy Weary feet Drink of
This fountain cool and sweet it
Flows for man and beast the same
Then go thy way remembering
Still the well beneath the hill*

One who has seen the inside is Leonard Cooke, who as a teenager waited for a dry spell, took a flashlight, and walked to the end of the tunnel. What he saw there accounts for yet another theory of the mine's existence. Cooke found his way to the headwaters of the spring, supposedly the 18-foot pool. He would then have been in the longer tunnel described by the Journal. He did not find the shorter tunnel described by the Journal but at the end of the tunnel and to the right he found a curious room.

It was about 10 feet on all sides and its most remarkable feature was the smoothness of the walls. Though cut out of solid traprock, they were as smooth and unflawed as the plaster of a house.

Years later, Cooke became an authority on the black history in Piermont, and his memory of the mine room fitted in with the story of one John Moore, himself a legend in the Piermont area. Moore was possibly the town's first industrialist. In the days just after

the turn of the 19th century, he operated a sawmill, a grist mill, and eventually a woolen mill that employed 15 people. He was also famous for his mill wheels, both those used for water power and for grinding. (In 1810, Moore's carding mill was on the east side of what is now the skating pond.)

Cooke thinks that Moore dug the mine to get rock to use in making grinding wheels. If his theory is correct, Moore followed a single vein of rock deep into the hill, going to all that trouble so that his wheels would be perfect.

Whatever its past, the present caught up with the mine-hole during World War II. The entrance was sealed as a health hazard in 1943 for a reason that, ironically, no longer exists. When the pier became an embarkation point for troops leaving Camp Shanks in Orangeburg, a hastily built sewer on the railroad right-of-way above the mine contaminated the water from the spring. The marble plaque disappeared, nobody knows where. (That sewer has long ago been discarded, although the new county sewer runs in the same place.)

The concreted mine-hole, overgrown with Virginia creeper, can be seen across the street from, and a few feet east of, the house at 175 Piermont Avenue. The mine spring, apparently re-routed when the hole was sealed, crosses the road and enters the Sparkill Creek from underground some 50 feet east of there.

A reporter who visited the site and talked with residents who remember the tunnels, the spring, and the plaque, regretted the passing of this piece of Piermont's history. The visit provoked more questions than it answered: Is the water now fit to drink? Could the spot be marked? Could a barred gate be put there to replace the faceless concrete? Could an effort be made to restore this

link with the Village's past as part of the nation's Bicentennial observance next year?

EARLY HISTORY OF THE SPARKILL CREEK SETTLEMENT

(Last year, the members of the St. Charles A.M.E. Zion Church embarked on a search for the history of their parish and in the process turned up some fascinating facts about the early history of this area and the involvement of blacks in that history. What follows is an account of part of their discoveries, from the notes of Leonard Cooke.)

In 1684, following an Indian revolt in Manhattan, fifteen Dutch families formed a corporation, the Tappan Patent, and arrived on the banks of the Sparkill to found the first permanent settlement where there had previously only been trading posts. The area of the Patent was bounded on the west by the Hackensack River, on the east where the Sparkill Creek met the Palisade (the ridge now known as Clausland Mountain), north along the Palisade to about where Orangetown and Clarks-town meet, west to the Hackensack, and south along to the Dwarskill (in New Jersey). The corporation bore grants from the colonial authorities and also negotiated with local Indians for the land.

Among the fifteen families were names that are still heard in the county today: Haring, Clarke, Blauvelt, DeVries. This last was one of the two black families in the group, the other being the family of Nicholas Emmanuel. Although it is little mentioned, there was a sizeable representation of black settlers in the original Dutch colony of Nieuw Amsterdam. In fact, most farmers in the area now known as Greenwich Village were blacks who had come from Holland. Their names offer interesting clues on their

African origins: Van Angola, Joseph Wingo, John Francisco, Anthony Portuguese, Manuel DeGroat, Manuel Minuet, Gussaint Briel, John Negro (who changed it to Swart, meaning "dark"). Captain John DeVries, father of the DeVries of the Tappan Patent, commanded 200 soldiers against the Indians. His son John was the second largest landholder (after Jan Peteron Haring) and became one of the most prosperous. His descendants included Elizabeth Clausland, who wed Augustine Van Donk and was listed in early records of the old Tappan church. Their daughter, Sophia Van Donk (note the spelling change) is listed in the membership rolls for 1717.

By tracing early census records and baptismal rolls, it is possible to follow the fortunes of these early families and those who came later. Many families intermarried and their descendants were listed on census records as "mullato" or "colored" to denote mixed blood. By 1840, over 50% of Rockland was black. Blacks as well as whites owned slaves. Many were black families came to the county to work in the enterprises of J. Ferdon, who owned most of the land between the mountain and the river, and who imported Southern workers for his mills, farms, and factories. Some of these families, the Lawsons, came to work for Ferdon and stayed to become prosperous contractors in their own right.

The history of this part of Rockland is replete with the names of black families that are still heard today. To be found on early records are the names of Cisco, Oliver, Brown, James, Jackson, Palmer, Williamson, Mitchell, and Cooke, with Dirk Cooke listed as a freeman in 1800.

There is still much more in the realm of local history turned up in J. Charles' search for its own history and Carl Nordstrum, who directed the search, is putting some of it

into book form. The reminiscences of older residents; their recollections of stories told by their grandparents; old records and relics of the ice house, Moore's Mill, the general store where the silk mill is now, the school house on the creek—we hope that future Newsletters may recount some of these.

VILLAGE BICENTENNIAL PLANNING GETS UNDERWAY

The area around Piermont, whose mountainside and shores reverberated with the 17-gun cannonade of the first ceremonial salute by a foreign nation to the new American republic, is cast in a significant role in this country's Bicentennial celebration which will start next July 4, to roll towards its climax on July 4, 1976.

Several local projects already in the formative stage are expected to involve almost every Piermont resident in the months to come. The major undertaking will be the preparation of a history of this shore of the Tappan Zee. The history, to be published as an illustrated book, will give full treatment to those events of the American Revolution that took place in and around what is now the Village of Piermont. It will also cover the earlier Dutch and British colonial periods that followed Henry Hudson's landing at the mouth of the creek now the Sparkill, where the Tappan Indian tribe honored him and his crew at a feast which included saucer-sized oysters taken from the river.

The local business and professional community, Piermont's writers and artists, high school and college students, Village officials, and every organization from the Senior Citizens Club and the Civic Association to the Sons of Italy, Rotary and the churches will have areas of

participation in the history and other Bicentennial activities. These events, spread throughout the Bicentennial year, 1975-76, will include parades, pageants, patriotic and cultural convocations in the Village Hall and the Library, outdoor and river special events and other observances.

Mayor Mimi Bryan, who has promised full support of the Village officialdom to local observance of the Bicentennial year, was about to appoint Piermont's American Bicentennial Committee as this issue of the Newsletter went to press.

"Local participation in the nation's 200th anniversary is an undertaking which calls for an enthusiastic response from every citizen," said Mayor Bryan in an interview. "We will have a dedicated committee to direct and coordinate the work of the many volunteers on the various activities. Our Village trustees will encourage and assist the committee to apply for an adequate share of the Federal and State funds to be made available for sharpening the people's awareness of the American heritage."

The Piermont Public Library, which already has a collection of photographs, postcard views and slides of historic structures and locales in this area, will serve as recruiting center for volunteers and a repository of suggestions and memorabilia until such time as the organization of the various projects is under way. Interested persons and organizations are advised to get in touch with Grace Meyer, the librarian.

One of the projects would have Rockland Community College students carry out research on noteworthy residences and other structures, including some that served as hotels in the mid-1800s when passengers from the West, arriving at the Piermont terminus of the Erie Railroad, put up overnight before taking the morning

sailing boat to New York City. A listing of historic and architecturally important houses in this area, including several designed by Stanford White, was begun several years ago but never completed.

Another project, which could be staffed by high school students, would be the interviewing, either on tape or for written reports, of long-time residents to obtain records of how life was lived in the Village in years beyond the memory of most of today's population.

The Bicentennial history project is the outgrowth of an exhibit of more than 100 early views of Piermont, Sparkill and Grand View which drew hundreds of visitors from several areas of the county to the Piermont Public Library between September 15 and October 31. The exhibit was part of the library's expanded services to the community which includes a 75 per cent increase in the hours that the library is now open six days each week, enlargement of its specialized reference collections and a permanent repository for items of local history. A showing of film slides on September 26 by Philip DeLorenzo of Blauvelt, former Piermont historian, brought such an overflow to the library that the more than 100 spectators walked down Hudson Terrace carrying chairs to the Community Center where the showing was transferred.

It was at that meeting that the Bicentennial project was discussed, with advice and help being offered by Ralph C. Braden, chairman of the Rockland County Bicentennial Committee. Two subsequent meetings held in the Village Hall have developed a strong nucleus of volunteer participants.

While a number of skirmishes between American patriots and Tory loyalists to King George III took place in these parts during the

Revolution, the local event of greatest international significance was probably the 17-gun salute given General George Washington when he went aboard the British warship Perseverance on May 7, 1783. This was a few days after General Guy Carleton commander-in-chief of the defeated British forces, had come ashore at Piermont and met General Washington and Governor George Clinton to work out details of the evacuation of the British occupation of New York City. A bronze plaque on a rock beside the Onderdonk House, at River Road and Ritie Street, marks the spot where the opposing commanders met before travelling to Washington's headquarters in Tappan for the formal discussion.

TOM DERAFFELE NAMED VILLAGE TRUSTEE

Piermont's newest trustee, Tom DeRaffele, brings to the Board Room a record of interest and service to the Village as Planning Commission member, plus professional knowledge of regional planning gleaned from his career with the Tri-State Regional Planning Commission. DeRaffele is responsible for graphics, mapping and printing studies for the agency which is the official planning body for the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region.

DeRaffele was recently appointed to the Village Board by Mayor Mimi Bryan in wake of trustee Peter DeLisser's resignation because of heavy business commitments. Mayor Bryan praised DeRaffele's foresightedness and policy-making ability as decided assets for the Board. DeRaffele will serve as liaison to the Planning Commission (from which he resigned), the Piermont Library and the Teen Center. Freshly returned from a Teen Center meeting, he was enthusiastic about the project: "We've got the nucleus of a good group," he remarked. "We need and want the kids' input and to have them

take on the responsibility to make the center work."

DeRaffele, who moved to Piermont in the late 60's from New Rochelle in Westchester County, was attracted by the historical aspect of the Village. "It is a small community which goes back a long way," he says. He recognizes, however, from his Planning Commission work on the Village Master Plan that one of the Village's prime problems is the need for a revitalized Main Street. He points out that actually there are two separate villages, and the apartment and home dwellers on the 9W half must be attracted down to Main Street. First step, he feels, should be adequate parking.

In his rapidly diminishing spare time, DeRaffele escapes to the golf course, and is a self-described amateur artist with side interests in graphics and photography. He has 22- and 19-year-old daughters—the older a teacher in Congers and the younger a Rockland Community College student with teaching career ambitions—and a 15-year-old son who attends Tappan Zee High School.

ORANGETOWN HELPS PLAYGROUP

The Community Playgroup has received partial funding from Orangetown Township's Youth and Recreation Agency. The Playgroup will receive \$1,200 for the October through December period, and \$3,000 during 1975. This is the first governmental money the Playgroup has ever received. It will be used to finance an expanding nursery school program, and to alleviate the severe budgetary problems inflation has caused.

The Playgroup now runs three classes, with a total capacity of about 45 children. Many Piermont and Orangetown children who cannot afford commercial nursery school



*"Rub-a-dub-dub—Three kids in a tub"?
At play in the rowboat tied up at the
Community Playgroup*

fees are given the opportunity to attend a pre-school nursery. Fees are set on a sliding scale, depending on income and size of family, and range up to standard levels for those who can afford them. All children in Orangetown are eligible. Over 30 children pay no fee.

Most of the additional income required for the Playgroup's projected school year budget of \$9,000 will be obtained through fund-raising events, by private and corporate philanthropy, and from tuition. The Playgroup also shares in the proceeds of the Tappan Zee Thrift Shop.

Like all groups receiving money from the Youth and Recreation Agency, the Playgroup's town monies will be tapered to zero during a five-year period. By the end of that time, it will be expected to finance its program from other sources. The Playgroup hopes to replace Orangetown's support with Federal Revenue Sharing funds. An initial attempt to obtain Revenue Sharing money was stymied by the requirement that groups applying for Federal Revenue Sharing funds must already be receiving federal funds.

The Playgroup now has extra space for four-year-olds. Those wishing

to apply should call Linda Rees at (914) 359-7683.

WHAT'S NEW?

Over the summer, the Village finally got long-awaited centerline markers painted on those danger spots at the Ferdon Bridge and the Ash Street hill. Stop signs are up, too, and should put an end to those awkward moments when someone flying down from 9W tries to share the same space with someone grinding up. The Village Board has filed an application for Federal funds, available through the county, for reimbursement for street marking, sign replacement, and guard rails.

Mayor Bryan is gathering signatures throughout the Village on a petition to Orangetown to exempt all property in the Village of Piermont from levy and collection of taxes for items 3 and 4 of the Town Highway budget. Items 3 and 4 cover maintenance of streets, purchase of machinery and equipment, removal of snow and cutting of brush. Since the Village does all this itself with its own road department and does not call on the Town, the Mayor feels we should not pay Orangetown taxes for these services. (Occasionally, the Village borrows town equipment for sewer servicing, but then must pay for the labor.) Comparing it to the situation several years ago when the Town finally granted Piermont taxpayers full abatement of the part of the tax that covered police, Mayor Bryan emphasized that this petition directly affects the individual taxpayer. "This tax abatement goes directly to the homeowner. It doesn't just go back to the Village and get swallowed up in the total budget. If we are successful, there should be a direct reduction in the Town tax paid by each Piermonter. And that's only fair, since we are already paying Village taxes for the same services

The Parks Commission has planted the area at the base of the trees along Main Street. This time, the plants are protected by iron railings and should be spared the fate of similar plants put in several years ago by the PCA, only to be lost to the foot, car, bike, and dog traffic.

A new course offered by the Adult Education program of the PTA in English for New Americans was scheduled for the Village Hall this fall, in an attempt to get the course where the people could get to it. Contrary to expectations, most of the registrants were from other parts of the district, so it was moved to the high school. It was a good idea, a good example of cooperation between local agencies, and if there is more demand, it may be tried again in the future.

...AND WHAT'S NOT SO NEW?

While we're mentioning things that *are* happening, let's just mention a few projects that could use a *push*. Speed Limit—The Board has been talking about reducing the Village speed limit for months. All that's needed is a public hearing and we could have a safer Village. Loose Dogs—This problem pops up regularly but seems to die down, after some ineffective rhetoric but no action, until the next incident. We've had children bitten, and a near-miss with a school bus accident. The county has a shelter now and the Town has a dog warden. Let's have a *real* solution in Piermont. Silting Study—Several years ago, Bo diFrancesca began pushing for a Federal "small projects study" of the silting of the shallows. It got nowhere. Now the villages of Piermont and Grandview have joined in another request to the Army Corps of Engineers for a feasibility study of the silting-in of the Tappan Zee Bay. The mud-flats threaten the commercial and recreational uses of the waterfront and endanger the continued use by everyone of the waters offshore. This study should not be allowed to die the slow death of

inattention. Annexation—Another project that needs a push is the extension by the river villages of their boundaries to the middle of the river. Under a previous Board, petitions were gathered to make this change and many people assume it has long since been effected. But a previous Village attorney failed to follow through and the annexation never took place. Town Attorney Werner Loeb is researching the topic but reports slow progress. Housing Code—The only way to safeguard the quality of the housing in the Village and prevent the abuses of overcrowding and neglect that turn decent housing into slums is to create a Village housing code. We've been talking about it for years, and once, after the Lawrence Park fire, there was even a committee formed. What's happened? Paper Recycling—The Village has been test-running the collection and sale of bulk paper waste for years—first with the CEA and now with the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Fire Department. Marilyn Pagliaroli, Auxiliary President, reported to the Board that their collection was successful but more cooperation could come from homeowners. This project has been a valuable fund-raiser for the CEA and the Auxiliary, both of which contributed sums to community needs. But the greater need is to the Village—every ton of paper collected is a ton that does *not* go on the dump and does *not* need to be covered with expensive fill by an expensive bulldozer. Our dump has a limited life and if we look around us we see that waste disposal is the most expensive headache facing municipal governments. We have a plant right in the Village that *buys* the same bulk paper waste from other communities that we pile up on our dump. It is within the power of the Village Board to require us to separate our bulk paper waste, and the collection facilities are right here in the Highway Department.

The CEA and the Auxiliary have done a good job, but still only a small percentage of the Village cooperates. Can we afford to let this problem drift along until the dump is full and we have to contract with Clarks-town to use theirs at their prices?

PCA MEETS NEW PRINCIPAL

At the October PCA meeting, President Bob Celander introduced the new principal of TZES, Dr. Jacqueline Holland. Dr. Holland, a Tappan resident who has taught in the South Orangetown schools and most recently was Director of the Orangeburg Campus of Rockland Community College, was appointed to the 9W school in September. She described her interest in continuing to involve the community in the school's programs, and introduced Mr. Nelson, of RSVP, a community agency that provides guidance and transportation to senior citizens who wish to offer their volunteer services to community organizations. In the discussion that followed, the need for local transportation was expressed, not just for senior volunteers but also for other residents who might be tied down by lack of a car. Shopping, medical care, volunteering, and other needs are hard to fulfill for many people in Piermont. Monica Bradbury suggested organizing people who would be willing to drive on occasion. She offered to organize the names if there should be any interest. If you would like to be part of such a volunteer service, either as a driver or as one in need of transportation, please contact Monica Bradbury, River Road, Piermont.

It was also suggested that a listing be made available of the various activities in Piermont that newcomers could consult. A special appeal was made to new residents of the apartments to come to PCA meetings and get involved in Village life.

Newsletter REACHES CALIFORNIA

The PCA received a note from former Piermonter, Bonnie Stafford Davis, in Oakland, California. At her father's request, Bonnie is receiving the Newsletter, and she wrote to express her appreciation and to send her regards to old friends. Along with a contribution to the beautification of Piermont, Bonnie sent regards to Bo, Frank Parelli, Lisa Merrill, John Hickey, Tim O'Shea, Dink Hardy, the Piescos, the Goswicks and all her other Piermont friends.

FOLLOW UP : DIPLOMAT GARDENS

A reporter for the Newsletter called on Mayor Mimi Bryan recently to check on the status of the new Diplomat Garden Apartments on 9W. Problems the Village Board has had with the owners of the project were detailed in an article in the previous issue of the Newsletter. The Mayor reported that a lot of progress has been made, although it has been necessary for the Board to maintain pressure every step of the way.

Temporary certificates of occupancy have been granted for all of the apartments, for example, and many have been occupied, but Village officials have been flooded with complaints: no screens when it was warm, no heat when it turned cold, etc. Asked why the tenants called the Village, the Mayor replied that the Village Clerk's telephone is not unlisted ("...not yet," she laughed) and the project superintendent's was unlisted for some time contrary to state regulations.

Under the Village's watchful eye the storm drainage problem has been taken care of. The Ventriglia property was purchased for the right-of-way for the line to the creek. The outlet at Piermont Avenue is

till not satisfactory—the quarry rock at the outflow is too small and the Village will have to make some improvements to prevent sedimentation in the creek—but these are minor problems.

A major concern continues to be the condition of the slope above Mine-Hole Road. A recent letter from the County Drainage Agency lists many of the same problems described in the last Newsletter...."deplorable condition of the slope...rocks perched precariously...hazard to children... trees will die because of suffocation as a result of fill dumped down the slope." The builders attempt to shape the slope and stabilize it with planting was called "an obvious fiasco," with planting washed away and seeding improperly fertilized and protected. However, the Village has obtained a bond for the project to insure that this work is properly done, so if necessary the Village could go in itself and have the work done, at the expense of the bonding company.

Work is continuing on the stores, most of which do not yet have a certificate of occupancy, and the Village is inspecting this work closely. Present plans call for a pizza shop, a stationery store, a laundromat, a farmer's market, and a health club, with indoor pool and sauna. Apparently less than half of the stores have found tenants to-date.

Mrs. Bryan explained that the Village's leverage continues to be the final certificate of occupancy, which the owners need to obtain their mortgage for the project. Asked how she viewed the experience with the Diplomat Gardens in retrospect, now that it is nearing completion, she replied:

"Well, two things come to mind. First, there is a feeling of satisfaction that we will have insured the safety of the tenants and adjacent property owners...this, after all, is

the function of government.

"Second, I think our experience will equip us to do a better job in the future. We know that we can't negotiate with applicants in general terms, but must be very specific about our requirements and have them clearly in the record. I think we will handle the Landlubbers Marina application better, for example, because of our experience at the Diplomat Gardens."

COMMITTEE ASKS FOR LIMITED CREEK CHANGES

Sparkill Creek needs help. Building and construction in the watershed area of South Orangetown and Bergen County has filled in swamps that store water after rainfalls. New housing and industrial parks have replaced fields and woodlands with streets and storm drains—sluiceways that fill the creek to overflowing minutes after a heavy downpour. So the creek has new problems that are bound to get worse. It is flooding roads, eating away at its banks, and some fear it may pose a real danger in some places should a freak storm hit the area.

But the creek's biggest problem may be political—the search for a compromise between a terribly destructive Federal project and a reasonable program to help the creek. The political activity began several years ago, when Rockland and Bergen County governments applied to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for help. Villages, like Piermont, were barely consulted.

The USDA has a standard answer for fixing watersheds: pour in money and concrete. Its solution is called "channelization," a deceptively innocent-sounding process, but in practice, violent. Channelization completely changes a waterway from a meandering stream to a straight,

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NEW IN TOWN?

If you are a new resident of Piermont-Sparkill and would like to meet some of your neighbors, here are some places in town where you will be welcomed.

The Senior Citizens meet every second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 2 p.m. at the Piermont Village Hall. To become a member you must be over 60 and a member of the Piermont-Sparkill community. The Senior Citizens have visiting speakers and other activities planned at the Village Hall and they also go on trips. For additional information you may call the President, Joseph Hurban, at his home—359-0517.

The Teen Center is open to all young people between the ages of 13 and 18 who are residents of Piermont. It is open on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings between 7 and 9 p.m. at the Piermont Community Center on Hudson Terrace.

The Piermont Library, also on Hudson Terrace, is the center for many community activities. Pre-School Story Hour is presented every Tuesday morning by volunteer storytellers and coffee is provided for mothers in the upstairs "Hall Gallery" where there are monthly exhibits of local interest. The Film Programs are regular events at the Library. Tuesday afternoons at 3:45 p.m. films for Elementary School children are shown; films for Junior High and High School age are shown on Thursdays at 4:15 p.m. There are occasional films for the entire family shown on Saturday afternoons. A schedule of Library activities is posted on the Library bulletin boards, but also on the Bulletin board at the Post Office. All events are open to all members of the community.

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INTRODUCING SOME NEW PIERMONTERS

There have been many new arrival in Piermont of late and we would like to acquaint you with them from time to time.

Bob and Mary Davis recently move into their newly built house on Route 9W just south of the Hudson Terrace Restaurant. Bob, originally from Concord, N.H., is employed as a Cryogenic Engineer at Union Carbide in Eastview. Mary is a Bacteriologist at Nyack Hospital and hails from Erie, Pa. The Davises find living in their contemporary home an exciting experience and are beginning to feel at home in Piermont.

Having just purchased a condominium at Roundtree Apartments, Emil and Leda Lim have moved to the Village. Emil is with Public Relation at the United Nations and Leda work as a Bacteriologist with Mary Davis at Nyack Hospital. They will return to the Philippines this fall for a visit with their families.

Arrivals on Tweed Boulevard are Lloyd and Carol Novick. The Novick moved here from Gramercy Park in Manhattan where they both work. Lloyd is an M.D. at the Center for Community Health Systems and is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Public Health at Columbia University Medical School. Carol work for Montgomery Ward as an Import Development Manager. Lloyd and Carol relish out-of-door activities—both play tennis and are enthusiastic canoeists and skiers. (They find their driveway an ideal spot for the latter!)

To these and other newcomers in the area we extend warm welcome greetings.

TEEN CENTER OPENS AGAIN

The Piermont Teen Center opened for the year on Monday, October 14, under its new directors, Dave Dickson and Gary Johnson. Dave, a Piermont resident, is a 6th grade Social Studies teacher at South Orangetown Middle School; Gary, a Tappan Zee High graduate who now lives in New City, teaches 7th grade at S.O.M.S. They will work as a team, taking one night each and the third night together.

The Center will be open for local 13- to 18-year-olds on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 7 to 9. This year will add girls' basketball to the activities, co-ed volleyball, ping-pong tourneys and possibly a boys' basketball expansion to include games with other local teams. Both Dave and Gary hope to add special activities through the involvement of community volunteers. If you have a craft, skill, hobby you'd like to share, they'd like to hear from you. They hope to do some videotape production and still photography, using equipment Gary owns.

Plans are now being made to get the teens actively involved in the running of the program and the fixing up of the building. There may soon be a "slave auction" as well, where the kids will auction off their services to local people for odd jobs and baby-sitting. If you can help with the program or just "be there," they're waiting to hear from you.

TZE...A COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

—Arnold Walton
(Arnie, a Grandview TV writer-producer, is now in his third year of tutoring in the "One-to-One" program at T.Z.E.)

There is a great sense of COMMUNITY at Tappan Zee Elementary....a sense of community that exists between the students and the teachers,

and among each other. There is a true spirit of enjoyment, learning and growth in the "little-red-schoolhouse" up on 9W. And this spirit does not only exist for those who spend the major part of their day there, it exists for those of us who are neither student, teacher nor even parent. And for we—strong and dedicated few—who are involved, this is Community!

It is almost impossible to separate the influence and growth of a community, from the degree of excellence of its schools, and now, more than ever, there is the need for even more involvement—one with the other.

Community involvement has, perhaps, been used too often recently as a catch-all for responsibility of citizens—or the lack of it, but only the involvement of *all* the people in this community with TZE will provide the continuity that keeps this *our* community. I am "involved" in this experience, and I am neither teacher nor parent, and I only hope that what little I am able to give to these exciting young people from Piermont, Spar-kill and Grandview, is equal to even a fraction of what they give to me in return.

Tappan Zee Elementary *is* an exciting experience to the few of us who spend a little time "up there"—and this experience must continue to grow, but with the help of all of us. As everyone knows, there are no fences or closed doors at TZE, and this leads to a most unusual sense of pride (on the part of all the students) in their school. But this is not only *their* school, it is *our* school...everyone's... and they want you to know it and love it as they do! And you can. TZE is as important a part of your community as the stores you shop in and the homes you love—perhaps more so...and the students and the teachers want it that way.

They want to tell about how, "I close my eyes every Thursday, and then I see me getting on a raft and going down the Hudson River all the way to New York City." (TERRIFIC); or how a few seeds and a lot of care make you "a whole nasturtium garden." (BEAUTIFUL); or, "I got all the way to book thirteen when they all said I might only make it to book eleven." (CONGRATULATIONS).

These young people...our young people...are the beginnings of important people in our COMMUNITY, and they will be our leaders—with your help. Not only do they need to tell you of *their* imaginary rafts, and *their* gardens and *their* books, they want to hear and know about what makes *your* life work. They have lots to give and tell to all of us, yet they are ready and waiting to join in programs in which we can give to them.

The whole world and beyond is what they want to know about. Anything from: writing or telling stories, to reading them; from tales of foreign places, to learning foreign languages; from knowing about paintings and photographs, to learning how to create them—and then to frame them; from understanding how we get our food, to learning how to grow it; from sewing, to knitting, to needlepoint; from poetry, to checkers, to chess; from stories about the Hudson River, to learning how to sail on it; from stained glass, to woodwork. The simple things we know so well are waiting to be "gobbled up" by this eager group from our community—"Our Kids"!

There are clubs in the afternoon—and we'll get you there if it is a problem—and there is a program we call "One-to-One" which deals with some special needs on a more individual basis, and the people who can help you decide where you can get "involved" are Margaret Holihan (359-4509) and Judy Brainard (359-2097). But if you are still not sure, visit TZE, and there Dr. Holland and the students and teachers will be more than glad to

welcome you to their community... your community...our community!

These are hard times, with many questions and very few answers, and the need for "cutting-back" is a reality in all our lives. But priorities must be established, and certainly at the top of the list is the growth and learning of our young citizens who now say—and hopefully will continue to say, "I am from Piermont, or Grandview or Sparkill," and not ever want to say "I was from...." Join the TZE experience and be a part of THE Community.

NEW NAVIGATIONAL LIGHT ON PIER

Lamont-Doherty has installed a new-type navigational light at the end of the pier. Replacing the old battery-operated lamp is a new 200-watt bulb that rotates 15 times a minute and is enclosed in a wire cage to protect against the vandals who regularly broke its predecessor

Port Captain Sidney Griffin of Lamont indicated that the lamp must be there as a navigational aid because of the shallow water. The Coast Guard maintains a floating buoy 200 feet off shore as well, but that is removed every fall and the only warning light for river traffic then is the stationary one on the pier.

Lamont leases the pier from the Can Company and allows the public limited access as a courtesy. It is private property, but in the past many people have come to regard it as public. A gate placed across the road was recently knocked down by a truck which ran right through it, and a storage building has been repeatedly broken into. This, plus the repeated destruction of the light, has prompted Lamont to begin considering placing boulders across the road to effectively bar traffic. They are reluctant to resort to

this since it would also prevent the Fire Department from using the pier for drills, but they may have no choice if the damage continues. It would be unfortunate if the thoughtless misuse of a few were to result in the closing of the pier to all.

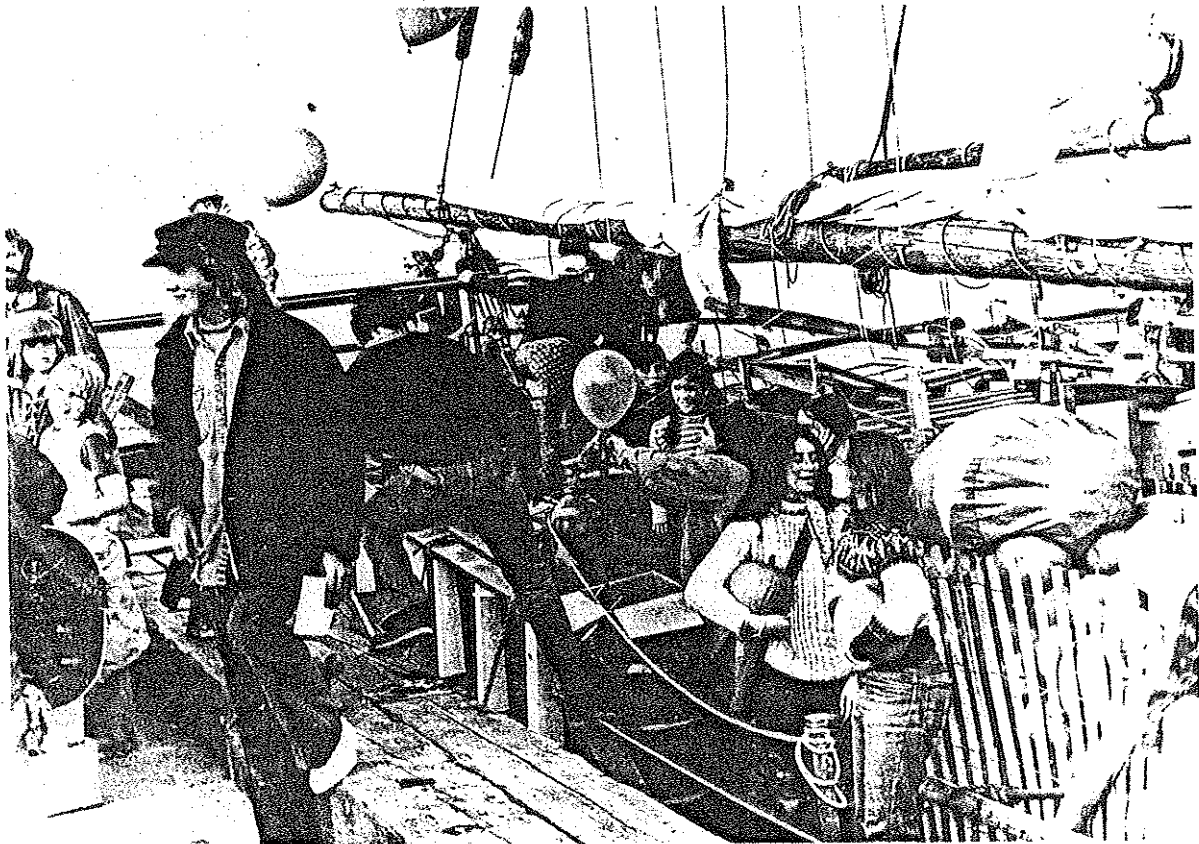
BO SHARES SPOTLIGHT WITH SCHOOLMEN

In the theatrical event of the season in Orangetown, Supervisor "Bo" diFrancesca will join forces with School Superintendents Joseph Perrotta of South Orangetown, Arthur Williamson of Pearl River, and John Sommi of Nyack in a quartet from "Fiorello!" as part of "The Show Must Go On," a musical review being presented this weekend by the South Orangetown school community.

The production, two and a half hours of songs and dances from Broadway shows, will be presented on Fri-

day and Saturday nights (November 15-16) at 8:30 and Sunday afternoon (November 17) at 3:00 at the Tappan Zee High School auditorium. While Bo & Co.'s rendition of "A Little Tin Box," from the musical based on the life of Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, will undoubtedly be a showstopper, the rest of the program also promises to be top-notch entertainment. The cast is made up of teachers, administrators, students, parents and community members, under the general direction of Jo Kolb. They have been rehearsing since early September.

The show is a benefit for the family of Lois and Fred Cady, who served the district as kindergarten teacher and master carpenter for many years. They moved recently to be near the cancer research hospital in Houston, Texas after it was discovered that Fred had a rare form of leukemia. Lois has since had a



The Clearwater tied up at Piermont's pier and was visited by local residents and schoolchildren

radical mastectomy and faces another. Friends in South Orangetown wanted to help, and began planning this benefit before news came of Fred's death in late August. The courage of Lois and her children in the face of cumulative tragedy has awed her friends, who hope that the receipts from the benefit will make a real dent in their financial burdens.

Tickets (\$3 for adults; \$1.50 for children under 12) are available from TZES-PTA President Judy Brainard, Muriel Fallon at Central Office, or at the door Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

GIRL SCOUTS NEED HELP

Pat Williams, Field Director of the Rockland County Girl Scout Council, has asked for help in recruiting leaders for local Girl Scout troops. Adult leaders are needed for the Junior Girl Scouts (9 to 11) and Cadette Girl Scouts (12 to 14). The troops meet in Piermont, Sparkill, and Palisades. There are a number of girls signed up and last year's leaders are continuing on a temporary basis because they don't want to see the troops disband, but they can't keep it up. The Brownies are fortunate to have Lois Holmes, Sharon Flobeck, and MaryAnn diBlasi as leaders, but they could use some help too. If you can be a Girl Scout leader or assistant leader, please call Regina McClure at 359-2123.

POLICE STORY

A rash of recent rumors about a burglary ring that supposedly used the old right-of-way as a base of operations to swoop down (or up) on unattended homes in the area prompted a check with the Piermont Police about the true state of crime in the Village. In addition to exploding the story of the "Right-of-Way Ring," we turned up some insights into the

job of policing a small village and a short list of "pet peeves."

Rumors scored high on the list. It seems there's always some story making the rounds and gaining embellishments on the way. Gil Rusterucci says he wishes people would call the station when they hear a tale of crime instead of asking neighbors. "We'll tell them if it's true or not."

In fact, Rusterucci wishes people would call more often if they see or hear something suspicious. Too often, someone will tell him of a suspicious incident a week later, or will say, "I looked for you all over town." "If the car is on patrol, you could run around all night and keep missing it around a corner, he says, urging instead that you pick up the phone and call. If the Piermont car is on patrol, the phone rings through to the Orangetown Police, who take the message and call the car. In an emergency, the car goes directly to the scene. If it's a simple request, as for permission to park out overnight, the Piermont man simply responds to the Orangetown man, who passes it along to the caller. If the caller wants to talk directly to the Piermont man, he will call back at the first opportunity. "People often complain that we don't answer our phone," Rusterucci says. "Well, we can be at the phone or out on the street, but we can't do both; and I'd rather be out patrolling."

Being on patrol calls for special skills in observation—learning what to look for, who looks out of place, what spots deserve an extra look. He also keeps an eye out for potential problems. Many of these are the result of simple carelessness. People still don't lock their doors when they go out, or chain up an expensive 10-speed bike. The aura of old-fashioned safety in the Village is flattering but

hardly realistic. There has been a rash of bike thefts, one occurring in broad daylight on Main Street under the gaze of citizens who didn't realize what they were watching. Nobody notices—not because of the alienated indifference of the big city, but because they just don't pay attention.

Fears of out-of-town crooks descending on us to hit-and-run are generally unfounded, according to Rusterucci. "We do get a few, but we've got plenty of local talent right here in Orangetown." Frequently one arrest clears up hundreds of burglaries, and sometimes, too, a case is closed with a "recovery—no arrest" when the loot is found somewhere in the area, minus the thief. When this happens, the victim should be notified of the disposition of the case.

To keep up-to-date, Piermont's force has been taking advantage of offerings by Rockland Community College and the Mental Health Complex, such as a recent course on arson investigation and a series of programs on the personal and social problems confronting policemen in the course of their duties.

But the best help they can get would be citizens who keep their doors locked and their eyes open.

EDITORIAL

In a recent political wrangle, there was some loose talk about the PCA, ascribing to it inordinate influence, with some hints of Machiavellian manipulations of a "liberal" bent and even a brave claim to finally telling "what the PCA really is!"

The usual response to this type of nonsense is to ignore it, but it gives us too good an opening to restate the aims of the PCA for the many newcomers, and for those oldtimers who may have forgotten.

What is the PCA, *really*? It's the Piermont Civic Association, concerned with the quality of life in Piermont, open to anyone who shares that concern, for the annual dues of \$5. Its origin lies in those long-ago days when apartments were first proposed up on 9W. Some citizens got together to fight the threat, and having lost that battle, they decided that an organization was needed that would not just rise to meet emergencies as they occurred, but would work to prevent them by active involvement in the general life of the Village.

That involvement has ranged from tree-planting and weed-pulling to studies of the development possibilities of our greatest natural resources—the riverfront, pier, and marsh. The PCA has pushed the Village government to buy the old school property and make it a community center for all Piermont; it has supported paper-recycling to prolong the life of the dump and turn a liability into a fiscal asset; it has planted trees and refurbished Kane Park. It has fought high-rise apartments and down-zoning; pressed for a housing code and a development plan to keep the riverfront from exploitation. It has tried to keep Piermonters in touch with each other and with Village life through its annual dinner and this Newsletter.

Is it political? This Newsletter has on occasion endorsed some candidates in Village elections when we felt they best exemplified our hopes for Piermont. But the PCA is apolitical and non-partisan. Its membership is open to all and it has happened that both sides in a dispute have been members. The PCA is interested in making Piermont a good place in which to live and if you share that aim, no matter what your politics, you belong in the PCA. You can join by sending your dues to

Marjorie Spring, PCA Treasurer, Route 9W, Piermont; or you can come to the next meeting—first Tuesday in December at the Community Center.

—Margaret Holihan

SPARKILL CREEK (*cont'd from p.10*)

concrete-lined superditch, with all trees and vegetation cut back from its banks. Initially, the USDA's study called for a channelization project costing about \$6 million.

The USDA channelization project was postponed once, when local residents raised objections and blocked funding in the Agriculture Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. But the project is still very much alive. A committee of 18—nine representing New Jersey and nine, Rockland County—is negotiating with the USDA for a new study.

Fortunately, for any project to go ahead, all villages affected must give approval. Piermont has three representatives on the Creek committee, led by Kathryn Smith. Miss Smith, with the help of Victor Platus, a marine biologist, and consultant Emil diFrancesca, one of the most knowledgeable area residents on creek fish and wildlife, has sent the USDA an informal preliminary outline of Piermont's requirements that would have to be met before the Village could give its approval to any major project. Miss Smith presented the outline to a recent Village Board meeting before sending it to USDA.

Piermont's requirements and suggestions involve rebuilding and strengthening existing cribbing and stone drywall along the stream banks. The Village would oppose removal of landmarks, such as the old draw bridge by the post office. The original USDA plan called for removal and replacement of all bridges with standard USDA concrete models.

"I just keep asking one question at the Sparkill Creek planning meetings," says Miss Smith, "And that is, 'What exactly happens downstream?' We want to be sure the Village will be protected and that our creek will remain substantially unchanged within Village borders."

The creek problems are far from resolved. Alternative engineering studies have pinpointed the flooding problems to specific bottlenecks that could be opened up relatively inexpensively. And Emil diFrancesca cites chapter and verse on how minimal maintenance programs, such as cleaning out trash and fallen tree branches, can improve the stream flow, eliminating flooding.

"The USDA bases its plans on 100-year storm calculations—the kind of storm that has never happened and probably never will," says Mrs. Barbara Porta, South Orangetown board member, who also opposes channelization.

If the USDA would be willing to adapt its plans to the needs of the area, the agency's help would be most welcome, say Sparkill Creek committee members from Piermont. But if the choice is between wholesale channelization or no Federal help, say Mrs. Porta and Miss Smith, the best choice might be to turn down USDA altogether.

NEW IN TOWN? (*cont'd from p.11*)

The Tappan Homemakers Guild meets on Monday mornings from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the First Reformed Church parish hall on Ferdon Avenue. All manner of homemaking skills are taught and ideas exchanged. For information, call Mrs. Joseph (Dolly) Cavanagh.

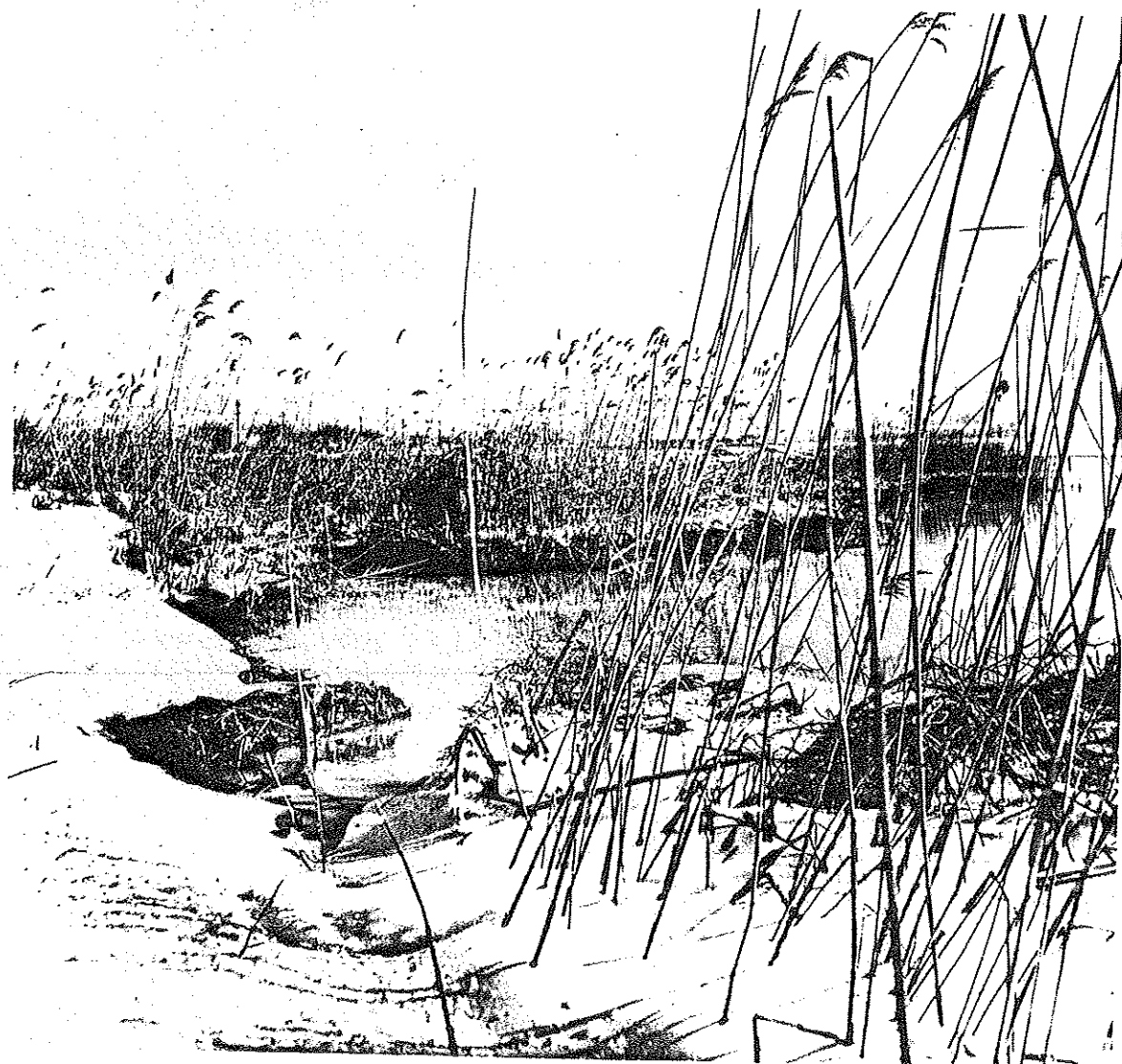
Churches. There are five in
(*continued on p.18*)

NEW IN TOWN (cont'd from p.17)

the Piermont-Sparkill area—they all would be glad to give information on their parish activities to anyone who calls. The numbers are: St. John's Catholic Church—359-0078; Macedonia Baptist Church—359-9732; First Reformed Church of Piermont—359-4637; St. Charles AME Zion Church—359-3509; Christ Church Episcopal—359-2858.

Many local organizations use volunteer help: if you have the time

they will be glad to hear from you. The people to contact are: for the PTA, Margaret Holihan—President—359-4509; for the Nyack Hospital Volunteers, Mrs. Phillips Lambkin—359-0191; for the Piermont Library, Grace Meyer, Librarian—359-4595. The Tappan Zee Thrift Shop also uses volunteer help—for information call the Manager, Mrs. Isabelle Stanclift—359-0806, or stop in at the Thrift Shop on Main Street in Piermont.



REEDS ON PIERMONT PIER—The popular notepaper with this photograph will be available again around the third week in November. Contact Sally Savage then at 359-5735

LIBRARY NEWS

This Fall brings a re-awakening to the Piermont Library and its friends. Some of our changes include:

New hours: Monday through Friday
from
10 - 2
3 - 5
Saturday ^{7 - 10} from 1 - 5

A new copier (Olivetti - 10¢/copy)

Stationery (available for purchase at our Library)

An expanded McNaughton collection (Best Sellers)

Plus many more children's books

A new Pre-School Story Hour
Tuesday morning at 10:30 a.m.
(Coffee provided for mothers)

A new Tuesday Afternoon Film
Festival for Elementary School children at 3:45 p.m.

And a new Thursday Night Film
Festival for adults and young adults at 7:00 p.m.

Films to be shown are:

11/14 - Two Tars (Laurel & Hardy)
Sad Clowns (Charlie Chaplin)

11/21 - Billy Liar (Tom Courtenay & Julie Christie)

12/5 - Things to Come (H. G. Wells Science Fiction)
Liquid Jazz

12/12 - Ramrod (Veronica Lake)

12/19 - Racetrack Murders
(Mystery)

Mark these film dates on your calendar and remember as well the following displays and special programs.

The November display in the Library features "Birds of America" quilt, a "friendship quilt" organized and quilted by Barbara Danneman, quilting instructor at Riverside Church and author of forthcoming book on quilting. The appliqued bird squares were made by Barbara, her students, relatives and friends (including Piermont librarian).

A Special Program on Quilting will be given Thursday, November 21 at 10:00 a.m. with Lisa Ordahl explaining the fundamentals of quilting and showing examples of different kinds of quilts. Any other examples would be welcome.

The December display will be Handmade Christmas Decorations by local Piermonters. Anyone interested in exhibiting his art and/or craft please contact our librarian, Grace Meyer.

On Saturday, December 7 at 3 p.m. a special program is planned for adults and young adults. Paula Scholz will help everyone make calico and/or patchwork stuffed animal ornaments similar to those found on Christmas trees of yesteryear.

Saturday, December 21 at 3 p.m. is the traditional Christmas Party for pre-school and elementary school children. They will make ornaments to decorate their own Christmas tree in the Library's Children's Room and celebrate afterwards with refreshments.

There will be a special Family Program on Saturday, January 18th. A Puppet Show, "Hansel & Gretel" will be given at 2:00 p.m. by Mrs. Gertrude Leinweber.

The PCA Newsletter is published for all of Piermont and anyone else who belongs to the Piermont Civic Association.

This issue was produced by the Newsletter Committee of the PCA: Charles Berger, Jean Berechid, Bob Bradbury, Gerry Celander, Bob Cone, Cynthia Crippen, Charles Grutzner, Lisa and Ted Merrill and Margaret Holihan (Editor).

Special features in this issue were by Leonard Cooke and Arnold Walton.

Pictures were by Sally Savage and Nathaniel Merrill. "Mine Hole" photo courtesy of the Piermont Library.

Newsletter is typed by Lynn Amos.

If you would like to join the staff or do a special feature, please contact anyone on the Newsletter Committee.

Piermont Newsletter
Piermont, New York 10968

Occupant
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