

The Piermont Newsletter

VOLUME XXXVII NO. 1

PUBLISHED BY THE PIERMONT CIVIC ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2007

Opening Pier To All May Close It To Cars

Anyone with a car can now legally drive on the Piermont pier. That's a major rule change and serious environmental threat to what many considered the village's most precious park land. In an ironic twist, the new regulations may end up barring all motor vehicles from the pier.

The only motor vehicles that could drive on Pier Road until recently belonged to Piermonters with free permits or out-of-towners who bought one. A lawsuit filed by a disabled Orangetown resident, who Piermont police had ticketed for driving on the pier without a permit, forced the change.

The village gave him a free permit, but he wasn't satisfied. He griped about pier access for nonresidents to a long list of politicians and government agencies, according to Village Attorney Walter Sevastian. Finally, he

continued on page 17

Pending Piermont Commons Sale Will Displace Low-Income Residents

Hundreds of Hispanic immigrants and other low-income residents living in the Piermont Commons apartment complex may be forced to move over the next 18 months. A private equity firm is on the verge of buying the Route 9W development and converting it to expensive condominiums or upscale rentals.

"We haven't yet closed," warned David Zweig, the managing partner of Red Brick Partners, the Washington, DC-based outfit negotiating for the more than 100-unit apartment complex also known as Diplomat Gardens. "Right now it is owned by someone so it's not too appropriate for me to talk about it."

However, he went on: "Our plans range from operating it as a rental to making it a condominium. What the units will sell for or rent for I couldn't tell you. We plan a fairly extensive renovation. It won't look the way it looks today. It will be a terrific addition to the community when it is done."

Red Brick has hired architect Robert Hoene and landscape architect Dan Sherman to work on preliminary plans. Both live in Piermont.

The U.S. Census Bureau says that 12.5 percent of Piermont, or 303 people, are of Hispanic origin. The redevelopment would displace a large percentage of them who now live in the affordable Route 9W complex.

"While we are sensitive to the problems of the landscapers and migrant workers and the rest who live there," Zweig commented, "our inspection showed as many as 10 adults in a one-bedroom apartment. That is a fire hazard. The community is a physical eyecore inside a lovely village," he added. "It is also the object of tremendous police activity."

"That's absolutely not true!" said Piermont Police Chief Michael O'Shea. "We get very few calls there. It hasn't been a problem for years."

John Angelis, Piermont's building inspector, said he was unaware of the overcrowding. "There are no violations against the complex," he pointed out.

Mayor Ed Traynor knows about the pending sale and has expressed concern about the welfare of the current tenants.

Red Brick is running a help wanted ad on CareerBuilder.com that leaves little doubt that it plans to move ahead with the work: "We are currently seeking a Community Manager to manage operations of 106 unit garden complex

continued on page 14



It's open! For more on Piermont's Dennis P. McHugh Library see Pages 6-7.

President's Corner



The time has come for the Village Board to begin thinking outside the Village Hall box.

The Board is hiring experts to figure out how much it will cost to rebuild the Village Hall. Its plan, as drafted by Nyack architect Robert Silarski, would create space for the clerk's office on the second floor by shrinking the size of the large meeting room.

The police department would then take over the entire ground floor. Everyone agrees that the village agencies have a critical need for more room. In fact, the police headquarters is far below New York State standards.

So far the Village Board seems wedded to the Silarski proposal, despite the well-reasoned arguments of various critics. They say that the village plan lacks any provision for future growth while reducing the size of the only meeting place in the village that can accommodate a large crowd. They also point out that while construction, which will be messy and disruptive and will last at least a year, is going on the village will need to find temporary space for its workers.

These critics have made a variety of suggestions, none of which the Board

seems to welcome. These include moving the police or the clerk's office to the village-owned school annex building on Hudson Terrace; buying an existing building for offices or building a new police station on land the village already has. They say that their plans would be cheaper than the one proposed by Silarski, but at this point no one really knows the cost of any proposal.

The village has been suffering a space squeeze for a long time. Instead of facing the problem, successive Village Boards, terrified of the political cost of raising taxes, punted the dilemma downfield to the next administration. Much to its credit, this Board seems serious about finding a solution. It should be willing to look outside of the Village Hall to find the answer.

~Bob Samuels

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST ART RITTENBERG, DEAD AT 81

Few Piermonters have given as much of their time and energy to the village as Art Rittenberg, a man of considerable charm and wit, who died recently at the age of 81.

Sadly, his death came shortly before the official opening of the Dennis P. McHugh Piermont Public Library. It had been one of Art's favorite causes. Through the Friends of the Piermont Library, an organization which he helped found, he did more, perhaps, than any other single individual to raise money for the new building. But that was far from his only volunteer work in the village.

For a remarkable length of time—more than 30 years—he

coached hundreds of youngsters in Piermont PAL baseball. Art was a crusty Marine veteran who had been at Iwo Jima in World War II, but you only saw his dotting grandfather side when he was out on the diamond teaching young boys and girls the fundamentals of the game. Days after his death the Village Board renamed the little league diamond Art Rittenberg Field.

He also was active in Democratic politics and took a lively interest in every side of Piermont life.

Survivors include Louise, his wife of 58 years, three children and seven grandchildren.

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

Editor: Bob Samuels

Contributors to this issue: Fred Burrell, Rosemary Cone, Joan Gussow, Jay Jacobson, Grace Mitchell, P.J. Mouquin, Sally Savage, Ivan Szendro

Advertising: Charlene and Dick Stern



**PREVENTATIVE
MAINTENANCE SPECIALIST**

845-359-5900

505 Piermont Ave.
Piermont, N.Y. 10968

The Cowboy Fields 2007 Under Threat Once More

Twenty-first century land use issues will revolve around smaller and smaller bits of land. As our communities approach being built out, remaining open spaces are becoming more and more precious, with every patch of trees and every pond and stream important to the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink. Preservation now of the great "small places" will be key in efforts to maintain livable communities into the future.

In Piermont we are fortunate enough to have one relatively large "small place," directly behind the Tappan Zee Elementary School, locally referred to as the Cowboy Fields (thought to be named years ago by kids playing there). As described in the Village of Piermont Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP), the property "is located on the slope of the Palisades above the Sparkill Creek and includes a large undeveloped area with a pond, brook, wetlands, woodlands and fields."

It is a wildlife corridor, linking Tallman Mountain State Park with Clausland Mountain, and has "the most exceptional scenic vistas—overlooking the Sparkill Creek valley as it opens out onto the Hudson River." It is also "fully visible from the lower elevations of Piermont and the opposite shore of the Hudson River Valley," its enclosing greenness is one of the things that makes Piermont special, and its role in watershed protection is vital in our steeply sloped environment.

The 39.5-acre property is owned by the South Orange-town Central School District. Frederick Whiton sold it "to the school district at much less than he has been offered by other groups," in 1951. He had reportedly turned down a real estate developer because "he wanted the school to have it." In the 1980s, citizen action stopped the sale of the property for real estate development, and, periodically over the next two decades, concerns were raised about the future of this land as rumors circulated about proposed real estate schemes.

Finally in early 2000, after Rockland County announced its new Open Space Acquisition Program, Piermont citizens nominated the Cowboy Fields for permanent conservation under this program. They sent petitions signed by 135 residents in support of the move. In April of that year, the County announced that the Cowboy Fields was one of the five parcels that it would try to acquire as part of the new program. In its resolution of October 2001, the Piermont Village Board expressed its support for "the preservation of the Cowboy Fields as open space."

The Cowboy Fields, excluding 10 acres where the Tappan Zee Elementary School sits, was recently appraised as 29 acres, with a value of \$8-10 million. Critics charge that the appraisal was skewed toward real estate development with little consideration given to any other options.

Private and state agencies, as well as Rockland County, back the idea of preserving the land. Residents are encouraged to write to AnnMarie Uhl, the school board member representing Piermont, with their concerns and ideas about the property. Please send your letters to her at 17 DeLongis Court, Sparkill, NY 10976, and copy to the Superintendent's Office, SOSCD, at 160 Van Wyck Boulevard, Blauvelt, NY 10913.

You may go to www.socsd.org to read the minutes of the last several school board meetings at which this issue has been discussed. And for more information about organizing efforts in Piermont, please contact Nata Traub at 359-0882 or at cowboyfields@aol.com.

~Grace Mitchell

Organic Drycleaning **The Mobile Drycleaner**
 Non Toxic No Odor No Allergic Reaction No Perc
 Declared Non-Hazardous by the E.P.A.
 For Pricing & More Info Visit
TheMobileDrycleaner.Net
 Or
Call 845-942-4071
 Larry Sorrento Free Pickup & Delivery
 No Need to be Home Monthly Billing

WHERE EVERY CHILD IS AN HONORED STUDENT



At Blue Rock School we offer interdisciplinary classes, a nurturing environment and hands-on experience

- Day School for grades Pre-K-8
- New After School Program
- Open House Jan. 27, 10-12

BLUE ROCK SCHOOL
 110 Demarest Mill Rd, West Nyack, NY 10994 ☎ (845) 627-0234
 ☎ Blue Rock is a not-for-profit day school
 ☎ www.bluerockschool.org

CALL

A W APPLIANCE CO., LTD.
 Repairs On All Makes & Models
 Washers • Dryers • Dishwashers • Refrigerators
 Ranges • Cooktops • Wall Ovens • Disposers
 Air Conditioning • Compactors • Instant Hot
(845) 634-6466

for service

Piermont's New Police Chief Was Born To Be A Cop



Police Chief Michael O'Shea.

All Michael O'Shea, Piermont's new police chief, ever wanted to be is a cop. Maybe it was in his DNA. Consider this: his father is a retired Clarkstown police lieutenant. His brother is a sergeant on the New York City force where his nephew is a patrolman. His uncle, Tim, now a Tappan lawyer, was Piermont's police chief

before the recently retired Tom Gaynor took the job. So Michael isn't the first O'Shea to head the village force.

Our current Chief O'Shea broke into police work in 1982, with the Rockland County Sheriff's Department. Three years later he joined the Piermont department. He already was familiar with the village. "My family is an old-time Piermont family," he explains. They moved to West Nyack when he was five or six. Today, Michael is 45, married and the father of two boys, 12 and 16. He has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. His wife is a social worker in the Clarkstown schools.

Don't look for any dramatic changes in the department under Chief O'Shea: "Tom Gaynor and I have similar managing styles," he explains. However, he plans a greater emphasis on training and public relations. "The problem is that people do not know what we do," he says. "If you are not putting the facts out there, there is a perception that nothing is happening. The best way to combat rumor and misinformation is with the facts.

Soon the police will have a website. The PAL already has one (piermont-PAL.com).

"A big concern in Piermont is traffic safety," the new chief says. "People need to know how many summonses

we issue and that we are getting a lot of grant money from the state for radar and other traffic purposes. We'll be posting that information and our monthly statistics and arrests on the web. In addition, I've asked Detective Brian Holihan to send out press releases about what we are doing. People need to know. We are going to get the information out there through the newspapers and the website."

Chief O'Shea wants to be accessible to the public. That's one reason he plans to attend every Village Board meeting. "I think it is very important that I be there," he says. "I want to know what's going on and I want people to see me. If someone has concerns that I need to address they can talk to me there.

"We have an excellent department here," he points out. "We are very fortunate. We have excellent officers who take pride in their work. I think people are happy with the level of services we provide. I like coming to work. I care about the community and I look forward to the challenges.

"I love being a police officer," he adds unnecessarily.

Indoor & Outdoor Seating

SIDEWALK CAFE

...and Patio Bar

American Continental with A Southwestern Flair

482 Piermont Avenue, Piermont, NY 10968

(845) 359-4439

www.thesidewalk-cafe.com

Casual BOONDOCKS Clothing

Life is good!

Life is good!

Life is good!

Fleecy socks, sweatshirts and more, Jake is ready for winter!

www.boondocksofpiermont.com

Boondocks • 490 Piermont Ave., Piermont • 845-365-2221

The pier attracted many visitors this winter. First came the snowy owl (as captured by photographer Steven Sisto), a bird rarely seen outside of the Arctic. Then came another arctic bird not usually seen here, an ivory gull (as photographed by

Drew Ciganek). In early spring, a harbor seal hung out there. Thanks to word spreading on the Internet, photographers with long lenses from all up and down the East Coast flocked here to snap pictures of the birds.

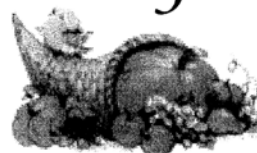


“A Complete Beverage Store”
224 Livingston Street (Rt. 303)
Northvale, New Jersey 07647
Phone: 201-768-8848

- New Management • Better Selections • Lower Prices
- Large Selection of Import & Microbrew Beers
- Extensive Fine Wine Library Available

<p>15% OFF</p> <p>Any Mix & Match Wine 12 Bottles or More - 750 ML or Larger Cannot be combined with any other offer</p>	<p>20% OFF</p> <p>Any Mix & Match Wine 24 Bottles or More - 750 ML or Larger Cannot be combined with any other offer</p>
---	---

Community Market



485 Piermont Avenue
Piermont, NY 10968

Tel: 845-359-0369 Fax: 845-358-0819

They'll Make The Old Library Their Home



Alexis Starke and Martyn Ryan visit their soon to be new home, the old Piermont library, with Alexis's mom June Starke (right).

We have a new library, thanks in part to the sale of the old library which in its ultimate dignity occupied a place on Hudson Terrace.

The new owners of the 1838 Greek revival building are Alexis Starke and Martyn Ryan who have been living in Ireland. Alexis, the 29-year-old daughter of June Starke of Tappan and the late Paul Starke, was born in Piermont. She says she dreamt of living in the building as a young girl.

Alexis remembers visiting Grace Meyer in the library with her mother, a good friend of Grace's. She also remembers, when she was 7 or so, attending

the after-school movies and the summer program, the "Beachcomber Book Club", offered by the library where she made friends she would know later in high school. Alexis moved to Ireland in 1999 as a graduate student studying art. The next year she met Martyn, now 34, an Irish chemical engineer and project manager.

They have left tenants in a small house they own in Newbridge, County Kildare, where they lived for more than 3 years. It was a move that was sad for them in many ways. They'll miss Martyn's family, and a group of children who attended Alexis's art classes.

When the library was first put on the market, they were still in Ireland. They bid on the building in April after looking at many pictures of it, from Alexis's mother. They had to convince themselves it was the place they could call home. They arrived in Tappan in early February in time for the closing.

And with that behind them, the fun begins: to decide what floor, what space will be the kitchen, what the first floor will become, whether the fire places (all 4 of them) work or not. Alexis said, it seems to make sense to put the kitchen on the middle floor with its high ceilings, large windows and bright light, a kitchen which will also be their place to eat and be near the living room on the same floor.

The old "children's room" on the first floor could be an art studio, or it could become a den, Alexis thinks. And somewhere they'll add another bath and make a small office off the living room in a space which adjoins

the second floor balcony. That balcony looks over houses which occupy a former sheep meadow, or did, back before the Civil War when the building was new.

History and change is never more than a few blocks away in this river community.

~Rosemary Cone

Sounds In The Library


To celebrate the opening of what has been envisioned as a "cultural center" for the village, the Piermont Library Board commissioned Tappan composer John Morton to create a unique sound experience, entitled SonicHudson. The library will play it at selected times until the end of May.

Morton is a "postmodern composer" who has achieved distinction for a new use of music boxes in his CDs "Outlier" and "Solo Traveler". In 2005, his sound installation "The Diaries of Emily Trevor" was featured at the Hudson River Museum in

The generosity of two members of the Piermont Civic Association, who wish to remain anonymous, covered the entire cost of a table for the new Piermont library. None of the organization's other funds were used to make the purchase.

Steven McCune
Physical Therapist, PES

Gregory Stemkowski
Physical Therapist, CSCS, PES

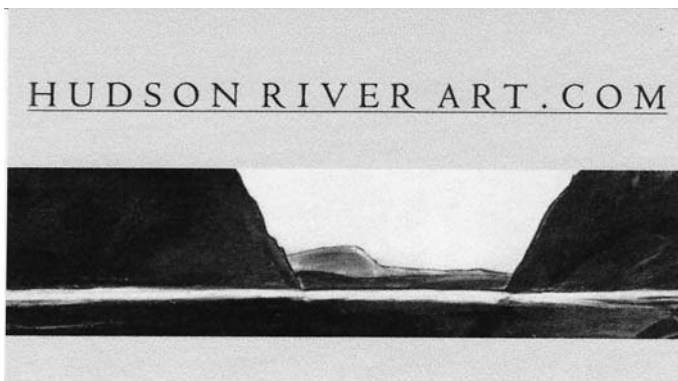


PHYSICAL THERAPY
Integrated Orthopedic and Sports Rehab

135 E. Erie Street
Blauvelt, NY 10913

Phone: 845-680-CORE
Fax: 845-680-2675

(2673)



Yonkers. New York Times reviewer Benjamin Genocchio wrote at the time that the "textured installation is sensitively attuned to the context. You really feel at times that you are in the presence of the home's early inhabitants."

The same can be said of SonicHudson. For the project, Morton traveled up and down the Hudson, collecting sounds both on the water—from the Riverkeeper's boat—and the shoreline along the Piermont Pier. At the Beacon Institute he obtained access to oral history tapes of interviews with Hudson River fishermen and at Lamont Doherty where he was able to hear undersea sounds that resonate with the concept of the Hudson as estuary.

The project was made possible through a \$16,000 grant from The New York State Music Fund.

Traynor Photo Show Opens Piermont's New Library

As crowds of Piermonters wandered through the new Dennis P. McHugh library on opening day, they found, a somewhat noir collection of striking black and white photographs staring down at them from the south wall of the foyer. On close examination, the pictures turned out to be portraits of people they might recognize as neighbors.

The photos are the work of 27-year-old Trevor Traynor, a Piermonter since



Piermont twin firefighters Tim and Tom Temple as photographed by Trevor Traynor.

early childhood and middle son of Piermont Mayor Ed Traynor. Trevor has been photographing his neighbors over the last two years as part of a series he calls "My Piermont."

After completing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Studio Art from the University of Colorado in 2002, an educational passage during which he managed to put in a lot of travel time, Traynor spent a year wandering the world with a Hasselblad camera. Back in New York, he began showing his photos. They earned him a number of grants, scholarships and awards, exhibits in a variety of venues, publication in various magazines, and, ultimately, representation in a San Francisco art gallery. His latest gallery show in Manhattan was at Invisible NYC.

When I talked to Traynor by phone shortly before the library opening I asked how he happened to go into

photography. Had it been a long-time interest? "Well, my dad had an old Nikon," he said, "and in my senior year in high school I got really interested in taking pictures." Did he then decide to be a photographer? "No, I started college in the Business School. When I took a year off to become a legal resident of Colorado, I worked and took night classes in photography," and the die was cast.

I told Trevor that his pictures seemed rather dark to me. Was that how he saw Piermont?

He said he'd answer that question sometime over a cup of coffee.

~Joan Gussow

For more info about Trevor visited his website at: TrevorTaynor.com

New Library Hours

Monday -Thursday, 10-8

Friday, 10-5

Saturday, 11-4

Sunday, 12-4



Alfred & Benita Ginsberg

AB ARTISANS

Fine Estate Jewelry & Custom Designs
Vintage Watches

474 Piermont Avenue
Piermont, New York 10968
845-359-6639

email: info@abartisans.com
website: www.abartisans.com

Maureen M. Pellegrini

Associate Broker

maureen.pellegrini@prudentialrand.com



Prudential

Rand Realty

268 S. Main Street
New City, NY 10956

Bus 845 770-1171 845 634-1967

Cell phone 845 216-3536



Piermont's Future Firemen



Piermont's future firemen practice on the roof of the school annex building. Fred Burrell photo

Some Piermont teenagers get out of bed early on Sunday mornings to learn how to protect our village. They're in the Explorer program of the Empire Hose Company where they're taught the full range of skills it takes to be a fireman.

Chief Danny Goswick started the program a little over a year ago with

just three teenagers. Now there are 17 who get up every Sunday morning and put on 100 pounds of equipment to learn how to fight fires and rescue people. "They learn everything a fireman does," Goswick explains

It gives energetic young members of the Piermont community a very meaningful purpose. Although there is a similar Rockland County program, Piermont is the only local community that has an Explorer group. Most members live in Piermont, but four are from Sparkill, two from Blauvelt, one from Tappan and one all the way from New City.

"It's great basic knowledge that we learn," 14-year-old Bobby Daly says. "We enjoy it. To get up at 8, it's got to be something good if you're a teenager."

The Piermont Fire Department has 88 active members—less than in years past. The community needs future firemen. What better candidates can it find than teenagers who already have learned the ropes of hoses and ladders?

The Explorers study first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). They learn how to use the Jaws of Life, and how to make a high angle rescue with ropes off a mountain. They have

SCUBA training at the South Orangetown Junior High School pool every Wednesday.

Senior Explorers have gone out on real calls. Recently, they were involved in an underwater search for stolen goods that thieves had thrown in the river off Stony Point.

Beyond learning the skills and work of fire fighting, the Explorers extend their young energy out into the community in other ways. They helped rebuild the shelter at the skating pond, gutting it and helping Chief Goswick restore the roof.

On a recent Sunday, the Explorers used the aerial ladder to climb to the roof of the Piermont Community Center. Twelve- to fifteen-year-olds clambered over the building, carrying chain saws, wearing one-hour breathing apparatus and lifting ladders as a team.

Inside the building, the firemen-to-be learned how to make their way past obstacles in a dark or smoke-filled room. They tested floors by banging with an axe as they moved forward, one foot extended, testing for holes or debris ahead of them.

D.T. Kennedy, who's 12, said, "This is only my second time. It's just great. My Dad's a fireman and I love it."

PIERMONT P.B.A

478 PIERMONT AVENUE • PIERMONT, NEW YORK 10968

PHONE: 845-359-0240

Fifteen-year-old Nico Seminelli added, "It's a wonderful group. I'm going to join the Sparkill fire department in April."

The skills learned are the real ones the department uses, Chief Goswick points out.

As the day's training was about to end, the fire siren started wailing. Some Explorers were still in the aerial ladder truck as it roared off to make a real life rescue of someone trapped in a Piermont Landing elevator.

~Fred Burrell

DPW Open House Saturday, May 26

The Piermont Department of Public Works will be holding its open house Saturday, May 26, from 10 a.m. until 2:00p.m. All village residents are welcome to tour the facility at 300 Piermont Ave. and inspect the trucks and equipment. The Department will serve light refreshments and hold equipment demonstrations for kids.

AUBREY FLOWERS GOODS & GARDENS



LYNNE AUBREY

510 PIERMONT AVENUE PIERMONT, NY 10968
845.359.1411



The Flywheel Creamery Piermont, New York



**The Ice Cream Store
with
So Much More!**



210 Ash Street, Piermont, New York
845-398-2433

The Newsletter Is On The Web

The Piermont Newsletter is also available on the World Wide Web. You can find it at:

<http://piermont-ny.com/newsletter/>, free to everyone with an internet connection. It is on a site maintained by fellow Piermonter Richie Stark.



MLS 

Debbie Blankfort
Licensed Real Estate
Associate Broker
Managing Partner

Baer & McIntosh of Piermont, LLC Tel: 845.359.8989 x321
4 Round House Road Cell: 914.522.5426
Piermont, NY 10968 Fax: 845.359.1601
www.baer-mcintosh.com debbie@baer-mcintosh.com



Why Piermont is a Mecca for Bicyclists



Jay and Joan Jacobson often ride in Piermont on their tandem bicycle.

Editor's note: In the warm months, Piermont attracts bicycle riders like powerful magnets draws iron filings. We asked Piermonter Jay Jacobson, a dedicated cyclist who sometimes writes about the sport, to explain why they love us so.

As a cyclist who has ridden over 6,000 miles annually and in all 50 states, I was thrilled two and a half years ago when we moved to Piermont, the favorite club destination of city bikers. My wife Joan and I became the only members of the 2,000 member New York Cycling Club (nycc.org) to live in the village.

Bike riders come here for various reasons. Its distance from the city makes it the ideal rest or lunch stop on the way

up the Hudson Valley to Rockland Lake, Bear Mountain, Harriman Park or the West Point area. Other bikers you see travel shorter distances to get here. They could be members of the rocklandbike.org or the Bike Touring Club of New Jersey (btcnj.com).

For many, our village, with its incomparable scenery, is the destination. Riders can pedal here over a variety of New Jersey routes. One favorite during warm weather months is the bucolic lightly trafficked road below the Palisades Parkway. It runs along the river from below the George Washington Bridge to Alpine.

Strong cyclists with hill climbing ability come to Piermont for the outstanding complex of roads in the hills overlooking the village. There is nothing comparable near the city. These roads include Clausland Mountain, Tweed and Bradley. All have light traffic, go through wooded parklands and spectacular views.

Piermont also offers visitors on two wheels a wonderful labyrinth of trails (which walkers and hikers also use). Of course, there's our pier but there also are unpaved trails throughout Tallman Mountain State Park. One runs through the woods, ending at 9W just north of the Oak Tree Road traffic signal. Continuing south on 9W, there is a mile-long car-free paved road from the Lamont Research Center entrance to the State Line Lookout. It has a snack bar and

(845) 359-2348

ASE Certified

SPARKILL EAST SIDE AUTOMOTIVE INC.
FOREIGN And DOMESTIC CARS

- Motor Overhauls
- Automatic Transmissions
- N.Y.S. Inspections
- NYS Emissions Certified
- 24 Hour Towing
- Latest Diagnostic Equipment

"Service From Bumper To Bumper"

JOE VERRINO
JOHN MACKENZIE

590 Washington Street
Sparkill, NY 10976

ABERCORN PLACE
Ltd.

A Place to Discover
New Designers

Nancy Kent
845 359-3212

Fax 845 354-9498

494 Piermont Avenue
Piermont, NY 10968



CIBELLE



HAIR CUTTING & DESIGN
BRAIDING & SPECIALTY STYLING
BODY WAVING
CUSTOM & CORRECTIVE COLORING
845 359-2892

glorious views of the river, Westchester, Connecticut and Long Island.

Another biker's favorite is the old unpaved railroad right-of-way from Tappan to Nyack. It's well maintained, firmly packed, with no roots, bumps, holes or large rocks. I use a road bike with narrow, Armadillo brand flat-resistant tires on them with no problem. A heavier mountain bike would be more stable but would be more difficult to get up our steep hills.

This last route connects with the newly paved five-mile-long Joseph B. Clarke Rail-Trail and includes a \$1 million plus pedestrian-bicycle bridge spanning busy Route 303. Cyclists can access it from several places in Sparkill. It now ends near the Lowe's Home Center (an extension to Blauvelt is planned.) A free map of it is available from the Orangetown Parks Department, 359-5100.

However, for some riders Piermont is just a coffee stop on the way up the Hudson Valley to Rockland Lake, Bear Mountain, Harriman Park or the West Point area. You have probably noticed the small green Bike Route 9 signs in Piermont. They mark a route that stretches all the way from New York City to Canada. An excellent free map of it is available from the D.O.T. at 431-5750.

Using Piermont as a starting and ending point, I frequently cycle on the unpaved riverside trail from Nyack Beach State Park (at the northern end of Broadway) to Rockland Lake. Once or twice a year I ride 100 miles in a day going north as far as Newburgh and return on the other side going south from Beacon, through Cold Spring and Garrison and crossing back on the Bear Mountain bridge.

Piermont also is the destination for

the 50-mile route of the annual Escape New York event organized by the New York Bike Club. Several annual charity events also run their rides through Piermont. The Piermont Bike Connection attracts city bikers as well because it gives them excellent service.

I'm hoping that a new Tappan Zee bridge will accommodate cyclists (the current one doesn't) and that they'll build it in my lifetime.

In her book, *The 52 Most Romantic Dates In and Around New York*, Sheree Bykofsky listed Piermont as the only bicycling destination. I couldn't agree more.

~Jay Jacobson

Questions? Contact the author at joanandjay@aol.com. It's a subject he loves to discuss!

Tappan Pharmacy

Your Full Service Community Pharmacy
25 Old Tappan Road, Tappan, NY 10983
845-359-1777

We accept
most
prescription
plans

Unhappy with Chainstore "Service"?
We can have your prescriptions transferred to us!
Prescriptions filled while You Wait

Mon - Fri
9-7
Sat. 9-4

Stuffed Animals • Candles • Other Fine Gift Items

For your convenience
we are now an O&R Payment Center

FREE DELIVERY FOR ALL PIERMONT RESIDENTS

Arnold Finck Remembers The Way It Was



Arnold Finck stays in shape. P.J. Mouquin photo

Talking with an octogenarian brings years of local history to life. Arnold Finck remembers attending school in Piermont—grades K - 12. Though he's only 86, one of the stories he shared with me was family lore about his grandfather being fatally shot in Piermont in 1900. A scroll through the microfiche in the Nyack Library turned up the front-page story about it in both the Rockland County Journal and the Nyack Evening Star.

The grandfather, Albert Knieriem, was born in Piermont in 1868. By the time he was 32, he was the proprietor of Washington Hall, a Piermont hotel in what is now known as The Turning Point. Al ran the bar in the basement while his 22-year-old wife, Caroline Emma Meyer, kept the rooms upstairs and tended the couple's three young daughters. Arnold's mother, Caroline, was the oldest of the three daughters.

It was midnight on a sweltering hot Saturday night in August. A group of men had been drinking in the cool of the basement bar. "Al started to close up his hotel and a

number of men went out into the street," The Nyack Evening Star reported.

At that point, a brawl broke out between Henry McDonald and 20-year-old Frank Quinlan. Frank, who was drunk, was taking a beating. Al was a friend of Frank's. He broke up the fight and walked him home. When they got there, Frank, who was furious about the beating, grabbed a shotgun and returned to the street, intending to shoot Henry McDonald. In a drunken rage, he fired over McDonald's head. Al was standing at the top of the stairs to his hotel with his hand on the doorknob. The shots hit him in the leg. He died of gangrene in Nyack Hospital the next day.

As the Knieriem family prepared for the funeral; the Quinlan family was also mourning the loss of their son. After a remorseful Frank Quinlan had staggered home, he told his mother that she would never see him again because he had shot his friend Al by mistake. The newspaper reports that he was last seen heading in the direction of the pier. Frank committed suicide, they said, by jumping into the river.

Arnold Finck was born in Jersey City in 1920 and moved to Piermont with his family in 1923. They lived in a two-family house across from the Piermont Post Office. The McDonald family lived downstairs. Arnold remembers watching them raise and lower the old drawbridge (see story page 15) behind the Post Office.

His father, Walter Finck, was the paymaster for the Robert Gair Company, the giant cardboard box factory that occupied the land where Piermont Landing stands today. Since there were no banks in Piermont then, every Friday the Piermont police would escort the paymaster roundtrip to the bank in Nyack to pick up the money for the payroll. Back safely in his office, Walter would stuff envelopes with cash for the workers.

A web search of the Robert Gair Company indicates that Robert Gair was a printer and paper bag maker in Brooklyn in the 1870's. He invented the corrugated cardboard box by accident in 1890. A metal ruler used to crease bags acciden-

MASON SAMETT ASSOCIATES, INC. REALTORS®

118 MAIN STREET
TAPPAN, NY 10983
845 359 4940
FAX 845 365 1790
www.masonsamett.com

MOLLY MASON SAMETT, GRI



CARBER TRAVEL

FOUR ROUND HOUSE ROAD
PIERMONT, NEW YORK 10968
845.359.5499 TEL.
845.359.5377 FAX
Email: sandyd@tzell.com

ALEXANDER D'GABRIEL
VICE PRESIDENT

tally cut the bag. Gair learned that by cutting and creasing cardboard, he could make and sell cartons that were cheaper than the wooden crates and metal boxes used at that time. His paper empire occupied several buildings in Brooklyn. In 1920, the Robert Gair Company bought the Piermont Paper Company, a company organized in 1902, and moved to the village.

The Finck family moved out of Piermont to 279 River Road in Grand View in 1925. The house is known as the Carabia Spring House, according to Terry Talley's recently published book, *Gems on the Hudson, The Grand Views*. Arnold remembers a spring in the basement and a spring fed watering trough in the front yard. "The Grand View mailman delivered the mail with a horse-drawn wagon," Arnold he says. "The horse always stopped and took a drink from the spring in our front yard."

He also has fond memories of being active in the Boy Scouts in Piermont. The pastor of the Piermont Reformed Church, Dr. William V. Berg invited the Boy Scouts to come camping on his property in Vermont. "There were eight of us, and Dr. Berg knew a fellow with a dump truck in Piermont," Arnold recalls. "It probably wouldn't be legal today, but we piled our tents and gear into the back of that truck and sat on it all the way to Vermont! No seat belts or anything!"

Lincoln Stewart was the custodian at the old Tappan Zee High School in Piermont. "Every morning he lined us boys up in the basement locker room" Arnold recalls. "Then he beat a yard-

stick against the door to march us upstairs to class. If you got out of step, he'd tap you on the backside with the stick. One day Linc found an old cannon on the shore of the Hudson. He hauled it up the hill to the school. He painted it and mounted it on a concrete base and had it pointing out to the Hudson." It is now in Memorial Park.

Arnold graduated in 1938 and started his first job in the horse barns at Lederle Labs in Pearl River. Mabel Roemer, a woman he knew from the Piermont Reformed Church who worked as a Secretary for New York Life, encouraged him to take a job in the auditing department of the big insurance company.

When World War II broke out Arnold served in the Army. Later, using the G.I. Bill, he earned a business administration degree. He met his future wife, Elizabeth Fox, who passed away in 2005, at a Christian Youth League meeting here. They were married in 1944, and lived on Orchard Terrace. Later, they moved to Palisades and raised three children: Donald, Robert and Carolyn.

In 1949 the Lamont Geological Observatory moved to Palisades. A year later Arnold became the administrator there. "It was an exciting time," he recalls. "Everything was new. We needed to develop the business programs, scientific instruments, and a machine shop to build the scientific instruments. Our research vessel, the Vema, always came back with new discoveries like the mid-Atlantic Ridge."

Arnold reported to Maurice Ewing,

the director. He also worked with the office of Naval Research, the National Science Foundation. Though he officially retired at age 56, he kept going back. He served as a Director of the non-profit board of the Palisades Geophysical Institute.

Today, you can often find Arnold Finck working out at the Diplomat Health Spa where he keeps himself young.

~P.J. Mouquin



Tess Delia
flower & garden designers
Piermont, NY 10968
(845) 359-0129 · Fax (845) 398-3127

The Baker's Wife

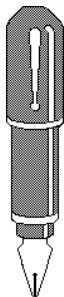
TAKE OUT BAKERY CATERING
33 OLD TAPPAN RD.
TAPPAN, NY 10983
845.359.2228 201.784.5688

The Mole Hole

*Make the trip
for gifts you
thought you
could never find!*

**Unique Gifts
and Kitchen Too**

486 Piermont Avenue, Piermont, New York • 845-365-2154



Readers Write

Thank you so much for making the Piermont Newsletter available to me! I miss everyone and everything there so much, but this brings me closer and gives me a chance to catch up a bit. I love reading about the "comings and goings" (although, sadly, there seem to have been many "goings") and what's happening in the village where I left my heart."

Leslie Stewart
Rockville, MD

Community Garden Plots Available

The Piermont Community Garden still has a few plots available. Please call Denise Oswald at 359-5714 if you are interested.

Piermont Commons Sale Will Displace Low Income Residents

continued from page 1

as well as coordinate on-site activities as part of a planned condominium conversion over the next 18 months. "The ideal candidate," the ad continues, "must have 5-8 years experience on-site, leading maintenance and leasing teams. Supervision of substantial amount of capital improvement activity as well as ongoing resident work orders required. Individual must be customer service oriented with the ability to manage budgets and forecasts. Experience with condominium conversions; HOA's a plus, but not required." It's offering a \$30 to \$40 thousand a year salary.

Established in 2002, Red Brick says on its website (RedbrickPartners.com) that it is a leading real estate investment management firm investing in single and multi-family housing, condominium conversions and other real

estate equity opportunities. Directly or through its affiliates, Redbrick owns close to 1,000 homes, making the firm one of the nation's largest investors in single-family housing assets.

20 YEARS CATERING EXPERIENCE TO ASSIST YOU WITH THE PERFECT SELECTIONS
* * * * *

PIERMONT
Fine Wine & Spirits

Wines for Every Day

TUES-SAT: 12-8, SUN: 12-6
503 PIERMONT AVE, PIERMONT 845.359.0700

OPEN SUNDAYS!



Two Gourmet Gals

Donna Chudayan

home 845-365-1690 cell 914-393-6666

Full Catering Service

Hot Dog Truck Rentals
hamburgers -- ice cream



HofDogDonna@verizon.net

Birthday Parties Graduations
Company Picnics



THE COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP
AN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION CENTER

Quality Affordable Childcare
Nursery Program for 3's and 4's
Full-time - part-time



United Way
of Rockland County

Toddler Program
For 18 months to 3-year-olds
Full-time - part-time
Call 845-359-9174 for info
204 Hudson Terrace, Piermont, NY

The Sparkill Creek Drawbridge, A History Lesson

The small metal drawbridge over the Sparkill Creek behind the post office is unique. Literally. Its manufacturer, the King Iron Bridge Company of Cleveland, Ohio, calls it a "one-of-a-kind lift bridge that "may have escaped the notice of bridge historians."

Piermont historians, however, recognized its uniqueness and had it added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985. In the application for National Register status, they described it as "a single-leaf moveable metal bridge" which is "remarkably unaltered." The bridge's "structure consists of a Pratt Pony truss deck built of metal angles riveted to gusset plates at each panel point. The timber deck is supported on metal floor beams and diagonal cross braces. When closed, the moveable leaf of the bridge deck is supported by a concrete pier and connects with a stationary deck section of similar construction and nearly equal length."

"The bridge is elevated by means of chains secured to the deck by metal pins with nuts. The chains pass over metal winding drums supported atop lattice-braced metal towers. The towers carry the single drum axle and are connected and strengthened by means of a portal brace with riveted diagonal struts. The geared hoisting mechanism consists of iron counterweights suspended by chains within each tower enclosure. The bridge appears to have been manually operated by a detachable crank which actuated a belt of chain drive mechanism. The geared crankshaft, iron reduction gear and upper and lower iron flywheels remain in place on the northwest tower."

At the time of the nomination, the bridge was still used as a "light vehicular crossing." Its drawbridge function was effectively rendered redundant with the building of the army bridge during World War II. Presumably it was considered no longer necessary given twentieth century transportation methods.

Since colonial times, commercial shippers used the Sparkill Creek to move goods and raw materials inland from the Hudson River. The waterway was one of the first access points west above New York City. The bridge was



The drawbridge over the Sparkill Creek is on the National Register of Historic Places.

built in 1880, when the village highway commissioners decided a crossing was needed at that point and "opted for a moveable bridge which could accommodate the passage of sloops and barges."

An 1876 atlas shows the current Ferdon Avenue continuing past the bridge, running out into what is now Tallman Park and looping back around down into Sparkill. One spur of this road terminated at a brewery along the edge of the marsh, and apparently there was enough through traffic to justify building another creek crossing downstream from the bridge near the dam and the Silk Mill.

They've closed bridge to vehicular traffic for many years now, and it's showing some signs of its age. In 1985 they said it retained "the integrity of its original design, including its simple, weight-driven elevating mechanism.

Who knows if it would still work, but signs of rust here and there indicate that a good overhaul might be in order to make sure it continues to retain its structural integrity.

~ Grace Mitchell

harbour house
Irish pub and restaurant



457 Piermont Avenue, Piermont, NY 10968
845-398-9802 • Fax 845-398-1903
www.visitpiermont.com



Celia Smith Katzen
M.A., C.S.W.

Psychotherapy

48 Burd Street
Nyack NY 10960

(845) 365-6306
By appointment

My Two Villages

Piermont is my second home. Curiously, the first is not Budapest, where I was born, but Nagygec, a tiny village on the Hungarian-Romanian border that was much like Piermont. It is next to one of the most trafficked cross-Europe highways. Nagygec, in ruins now, lies, sleeps, dreams. What is she dreaming about?

In 1971, an unusually big flood erased her from the map. I was a young actor then, looking for adventure. I happened upon this place and became a witness to its destruction. I saw its houses washed away. God knows, I tried to help in the rescue, but the only thing I rescued is a myth, which one of the few remaining elders remembered after the tragedy. Now I am trying to raise money to rebuild Nagygec and to complete a film about the legend.

The Judge of Blood, a monstrous tyrant, ruled the land, according to the tale. He got rid of his enemies by putting them into a grinding mill in his castle. He also kept his dog-headed daughter there to frighten people. Finally, Sandor, the hero came. With finesse and charm, Sandor tricked the Judge of Blood out of his land, and using only his compassion, turned the dog headed girl beautiful. Sandor, they say, was a wandering scholar, or poet, or shaman, or wizard, or all of those.

Now I live in Piermont, where my good fortune brought me 15 years ago. But the Legend has never let me alone. I created a theatrical piece based on it and I have been telling it to new audiences of the New World. I always hope that through my storytelling people can see how legends can be a creative, life-giving force. But how can I prove it?

This past summer, a crew from Hungarian National TV came to Piermont to shoot a "dream-document" film The Myth-Carrier Shaman with me. Piermont, my tiny treasured new home, came to my help. The Village Board waved our fee for filming on the streets. The police, the firemen helped too. One of my Piermont neighbor, Robert Halsch, became my partner producer of the film.

I feel the time is here to prove that the Legend is not just a fancy dream. It gives me strength to tackle with a mythological task: I hope to build up the ruined village, lying forgotten on the side of that busy international highway. And I hope that good-sister town, Piermont, will be with me again, with good faith and investments helping to prove that Myths are the truest stories on Earth.

~Ivan Szendro

The Conference of the International Society of Shamanistic Researches has invited Ivan to Budapest. He will speak about his plan to rebuild Nagygec. For more info contact him at TheLegendOfYou@aol.com† or phone him at (845) 536-8416. You can also visit his website: www.TheLegendOfYou.com

*Piermont's most unique shops
Together under one roof*

Buttercup&Friends

The Store for Children

Bazaar Mairead

Jewelry and folk art from around the world

Gee, Ginger!

Vintage clothes and accessories

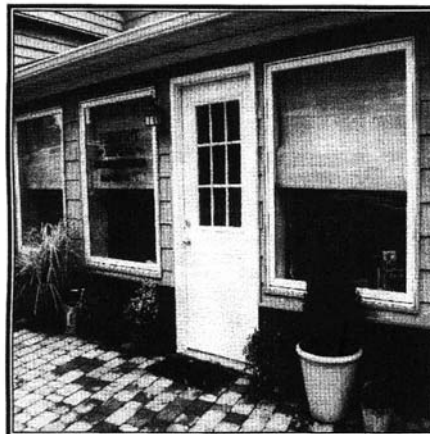
Across from the Firehouse

535 Piermont Ave. Piermont, NY

Now Taking New Clients!

Piermont Dental

General & Cosmetic Dentistry
Dr. Rafael Caniza D.D.S.



- Specializing in Cosmetic Dentistry
- 1 Hour in office tooth whitening with ZOOM™
- Nitrous Sedation to help with anxiety
- Aromatherapy Scents offered to help you relax during your visit

Come in for a free
Consultation

449 Piermont Ave.
Piermont, NY 10968
(845) 365-4270

24 hour emergency service 7 days a week

**Opening Pier To All May Close
It To Cars** continued from page 1

found a sympathetic ear at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). It owns the marsh and some of the land on the south side of the pier. More importantly, it holds an easement so it can reach its holdings from Pier Road.

To make its property accessible to nonresidents, the DEC plans to put a still undetermined number of parking spaces near the end of the pier. Once it marks the spaces, anyone can park there. However, Sevastian said, drivers will still need a Piermont permit to park along the road.

Piermont Police chief Michael O'Shea sees an enforcement nightmare. "When word gets out that the pier is open to all cars," he said, "we are going to be flooded with them. We'll have no control."

"The road is not built for that kind of traffic," commented another village official. "The traffic is going to be so bad that the Village Board will end up banning all cars," he predicted. "The law allows the village to do that."

"What the DEC has done is really absurd," added Sevastian. "It is the way that government shouldn't work!"

BE IN THE KNOW

Keep up to date on what's happening here by joining the Piermont Civic Association e-mail list. We won't share your address and we won't send you spam. You just get Piermont news, Village Board agendas and local announcements. To join, e-mail BobSam@optonline.net.



**PREMIUM DENIM &
DESIGNER FASHIONS**

510 Piermont Avenue
Piermont, NY 10968
www.paradiseblueny.com
T: 845-365-2582



Cafe Portofino
"Where Romance Begins"

587 Piermont Ave.
Piermont, N.Y. 10768

845-359-7300

Join Us! The Piermont Civic Association is a nonprofit group dedicated to the betterment of Piermont. Thanks to membership dues, numerous fundraising events and countless hours of volunteer work, Piermont has its *Newsletter*, Main Street has its trees, bike rack and flower pots, Kane Park has its gazebo and the Community Playgroup, Empire Hose and PAL have received generous donations, to name a few PCA accomplishments. Please mail this application to: Piermont Civic Association, Box 454, Piermont, NY 10968 I have enclosed: \$_____2007 PCA Family Membership (\$25 includes the *Newsletter*)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

REMAX

Preferred Properties
466 Piermont Ave.
Piermont, NY 10968
845.398.3600 OFFICE
845.398.3003 FAX
remax-preferredny.com



Come Knock On Our Red Door...



*Experience Why
RelMax Redefines Real Estate*



Bonnie Chapin
Abigail Rose and Lily Too
516 Piermont Avenue
Piermont, New York 10968
845 359-4649



TIMEHOUSE USA, LLC.

EDGAR PARRADO
500 Piermont Avenue
Piermont New York 10968
Tel: 845 704 7150
Fax: 866 403 4984
sales@stampsusa.net
www.stampsusa.net

Available at Ben and Oliver



THE PIERMONT
NEWSLETTER Box 454
Piermont, NY 10968

Presorted Standard
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MONSEY, NY
BULK RATE PERMIT 6803