

The Piermont Newsletter

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Like The Yankees, Piermont Is Changing Skippers

A baseball fan and village observer compared Piermont's change of Mayors to the Yankee's change of managers. Like our soon-to-be ex-mayor, Ed Traynor, Joe Torre, the Yanks outgoing skipper, was very effective despite being laid back and not detail orientated

Chris Sanders, Piermont's newly elected Mayor is similar to Joe Girardi, the Yank's new manager. Sanders is a

detail man, she pointed out. He's likeable but not at all laid back. Both new bosses, unlike their predecessors, are computer users and both were on the job before their season started.

Chris, although not taking office until January, has been cruising the internet, searching for grants to pay for some of the very ambitious plans he has for the village. Those include solving in the decades old Village Hall

overcrowding problem, making major changes to the Sparkill Creek (See Creek story, Page ##) and establishing an official village website. But the first job the new Mayor must tackle is to negotiate new employment agreements with village workers.

He has no plans to change personnel. "This village has a fabulous group of people doing excellent jobs," he says flatly. None is more devoted to the village than the youthful 46-year-old Sanders, a graduate of the Parsons School of Design and the New School for Social Research. In recent years he turned down job offers in Atlanta and Boston to remain in Piermont.

When they were living in New Jersey, friends here got Chris and his wife Marlana to volunteer to work for Piermont Civic Association. So it was a no-brainer in 1997 for the Sanders, who were looking for a bigger place, to buy a house here. Shortly after they moved in, their son Ben was born.

The number of people involved in the village impressed Chris from the beginning. "It was really, in a way, intoxicating," he recalls. The Sanders have continued to volunteer. Before Mayor Traynor appointed him to the Village Board to fill a vacancy, Chris had served four years on the Planning Board.

Sanders worries about what would happen if Piermonters stopped being interested in their government. "I think that it would be dangerous for the village," he says. "The trustees and the mayor never want to run this place on their own. We're not geniuses. We need input from many different places

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Caption: Winter, Piermont, watercolor by Edwin Dahlberg (circa 1960).

It was Piermont photographer Sally Savage that told me about the wonderful Edwin Dahlberg watercolors at M&T bank in Piermont. The folks at M&T were kind enough to let us scan this picture, Winter, Piermont, for the Newsletter.

Edwin L. Dahlberg was born in Wis-

consin in 1901. He graduated from the Art Institute of Chicago, then headed to New York City where he set-up a studio and worked as an illustrator. Edwin moved to Nyack in the mid-1930's, and married the writer Gertrude Dahlberg. They raised their three children Eric, Clare, and Karen in

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President's Corner



Driving home after visiting relatives in Massachusetts over the Thanksgiving weekend gave me a chance to experience Piermont anew. Our tiny downtown, with its perfectly scaled buildings, bustled with visitors. It reminded me that much of Piermont looks the way it does because there have always been citizens to protect it.

In the 1960s, some of our local officials planned to use urban renewal money to demolish the rundown brick buildings on the west side of Main Street. They wanted to replace them with a strip of characterless stores. A group of concerned citizens stopped that from happening.

Back then there were no trees on Main Street. Members of the newly-formed Piermont Civic Association wanted to plant them. It is hard to believe now, but there was opposition to this idea. People said that if we had them the village would be wasting money cleaning up the leaves in the fall. They settled the issue by agreeing to plant the trees on one side of Main Street.

In the 70s, the long-defunct Tappan Zee Bank was putting up branches all over Rockland County. To make them distinctive and very ugly it covered them all with blue tile. (The Chase branch, at the corner of King's High-

way and Route 303 in Orangeburg, still has the tile.) When the bank wanted to build a branch in Piermont, citizens forced it to use brick instead of the tile. Today, it's the M&T Bank.

Piermont Landing is by far the largest example of villagers having an enormous effect on the way we are now. No developer would have voluntarily spent the money to include affordable apartments, Flywheel Park, the north shore walkway and many of its other amenities unless villagers had first drawn up a general plan and insisted they follow it.

Because of declining enrollment in the 1980s, the South Orangetown School District said it no longer needed the Tappan Zee Elementary School. It wanted to sell the building to a developer who planned to convert it into a health club. Piermonters objected and forced the district to hold two referendums. Both times, the proposal was overwhelmingly defeated. A few years later, a rising school population forced the district to reopen the school. Last summer, it had to add a new wing.

A new century has begun and thankfully citizens continue to be involved in our village. It is Piermont Historic Society volunteers who are responsible for the stunningly successful restoration of our train station, and it was volunteers

who worked for years to build us a beautiful new library.

Piermonters continue to make a big difference. A few weeks ago the group of citizens who have been fighting to preserve the Cowboy Fields had reason to rejoice. New York State promised \$400,000 in grant money to help the village save the 30-acre, environmentally sensitive land. The pristine site lies behind the Tappan Zee elementary school.

Happy New Year, Piermont!

~Bob Samuels

Community Garden Plots Available

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

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A Plan For The Sparkill Creek Corridor

Chris Sanders, Piermont's new Mayor, has bold plans for what he calls the Sparkill Creek corridor. He wants to remove the silt from both the millpond and skating pond, replace the dam with one that they can open and rebuild the crumbling Rockland Road Bridge.

All of this depends on the extent of the pollution on the creek's bottom. The more heavy metals and other nasty stuff in the silt, the more expensive it is to get rid of. The Rockland County Drainage Commission had a contractor take samples from the creek bed in July and write a report on what it found. At a Village Hall meeting this summer, Ed Devine, the director of the Drainage Commission, promised to promptly send the report to the State Environmental Conservation (DEC) for a definitive evaluation.

But inexplicably his office still hadn't sent it to Albany at the end of November. "We've been busy with work for FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency)," he explained in an interview,

For Sanders and Connie Coker, Piermont's representative to the County Legislature, this was stunning news. Both won elections this fall, partially by pledging to push for Creek restoration. "Obviously, I am very disappointed," Coker said. Sanders was incredulous when told the report was still sitting in New City. He promised to get it moving quickly.

Removing the silt will be expensive, even if there is relatively little pollution, Sanders knows, but he doesn't

expect the village taxpayer to be stuck with the bill. "It's not our silt. Piermont did not pollute this pond," he declared.

He wants to replace the dam, partially because it has some structural defects. He believes there is outside money available to do it, he said. Many Piermonters don't realize it but the current dam has sluice gates. When a storm is expected, Piermont's Department of the Public Works opens them to lower the water level in the millpond.

Sanders wants a new dam to give us greater control over the Creek. "If we could bring the millpond back to its original depth, which I believe was tens of feet and not tens of inches, and build a dam that opens, we could flush the millpond on a regular basis," he explained.

It also would help control the flooding near the post office and on Paradise Avenue, he believes. "If a large storm was moving in," he explained, "on the Hudson's low tide we could release all the water from the pond. When the tide starts coming in, we'd close the dam stopping the Creek. That would buy us a couple of hours."

The final part of Sanders plan is to find funds to restore the historic Rockland Road Bridge near Canzona's Market so it will again bear the weight of two-way traffic. "This is important to me -- the millpond, the dam the skating pond and bridge. They all tie together," he said.

~Bob Samuels

Edwin Dahlberg
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Nyack, where Edwin lived until his death in 1985.

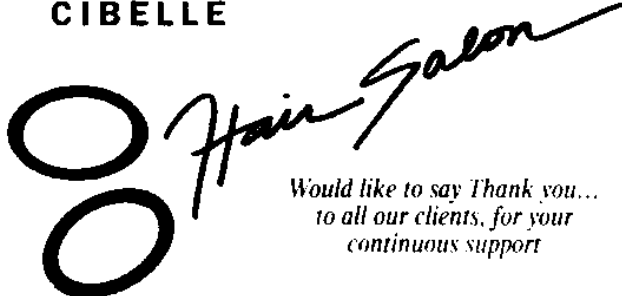
Edwin Dahlberg is best known as a watercolorist for his many scenes of Rockland County, its prominent landmarks and scenes of the Hudson River, Sparkill Creek, Nyack and Piermont. He was honored to be the very first artist selected to exhibit at the Edward Hopper House in Nyack when it opened to the public in 1974. His watercolor of the Hopper House has been widely reproduced and distributed.

There exists a confident directness in Dahlberg's watercolors. This quality, along with his almost calligraphic brushstrokes, so often incorporating inky blacks to great, contrasting effect, give Edwin Dahlberg's art a special graphic strength.

While his work has been beloved by his Rockland audience, Dahlberg's watercolors have also received numerous prestigious national awards, and have been exhibited throughout the U.S., including at The National Academy of Design, and with the Royal Society of Water Color Painters in London.

~Margaret Grace

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Breaking The Code

Piermont's zoning code is under attack. And it's a good thing.

This long and difficult-to-read document—complicated over the 42 years of its existence by major and minor alterations—has failed on too many occasions to do what it was intended to do: maintain the density and scale of the village's residential neighborhoods and protect its fragile, steeply sloped hillsides. A number of recent demolitions and new construction starts that had evaded a full review by the planning and zoning boards prompted the Village Board to undertake a cleanup of the Code.

Last December, the board appointed an Ad Hoc Code Clean-up Committee headed by Chairman Trustee-now Mayor-elect-Chris Sanders, and made up of he and trustee Joan Gussow, Planning Board members Karl Knockelin and Rod Johnson, Greg Toner (from the Zoning Board of Appeals), and Margaret Grace. The Committee was authorized to review our existing code and make recommendations for changes and additions.

At its very first meeting the Committee, noting that demolition of existing buildings to facilitate new construction can significantly alter Piermont's unique character, requested that the Village Board place a moratorium on demolition, until

appropriate standards could be adopted. The Village Board agreed, and at a public hearing on January 8th adopted a resolution approving a six month moratorium. It states that "no demolition permit shall be issued for any structure located within the Village of Piermont during the term of this moratorium, except if the structure has been damaged by fire or a storm and poses an imminent threat to health and safety."

The Committee has used the last year to address what it sees as the most serious Piermont Code shortcomings, and as of now, the Board had approved the following: a precise description of "demolition," (tear down or destruction of 50% of or more of the aggregate floor area of a building or structure); a requirement that repair or rebuilding of any demolished structure will not inherit the original structure's variances, but must be built in conformity with the zoning code, thus providing an incentive to repair the Village's existing buildings rather than demolish them.

Other completed changes approved by the board include: clearly distinguishing between a tax lot-a parcel of land listed for the purposes of Tax assessments-and a "buildable lot" that meets the dimensional standards of the Village codes; reducing allowed building height from 35 to 32 feet; defining allowed building height as

the measurement taken from the existing natural grade (rather than after the lot is reshaped for development) at the lowest point of exposure of the footprint to the highest point of the roof perpendicular to that grade.

The most difficult part of the revision has involved defining how much of what part of a sloped piece of land can be built upon or otherwise disturbed, and the committee has been reviewing zoning material from Orangetown, Grandview, various Westchester communities, and well as communities such as San Rafael CA. that have struggled to provide similar protection for natural settings, The committee is recommending that extremely sloped land shall not be developed or disturbed except for conservation measures, etc.

The Ad Hoc Committee is still working, and plans to continue its review, section by section, to find incomplete, unclear or conflicting sections within of the Piermont Zoning code.

"It's a bear" Margaret Grace says of the code project, which is expected to take a couple of years to complete. "But the village of Piermont is being bitten by code omissions every time a building is razed, hillsides are excavated, or views are blocked out. It is essential, important work."



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Piermont Is Changing Skippers

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to be able to make the right decisions.”

He especially wants to hear from people as he and the Village Board make the long-delayed decision on how to create more room for the village clerk and police. The need to get started is urgent, he says, because it will take at least two years after construction begins for it to be finished.

Sanders says Piermont is weighing four choices:

✓ Construct a new police headquarters building on the Plastifold property, a village-owned owned patch of former industrial land near the south entrance to Piermont Landing. It's now used to store road salt. The downside is that the property is contaminated, but upside news is that there are grants available to governments to build on contaminated sites.



Photo by Bob Samuels

✓ Construct an entirely new Village Hall and police station there or on some property the village owns or could purchase. Under this plan, favored by Deputy Mayor Fred Devan, the Board would sell the exist-

ing Village Hall to pay some of the cost of construction.

✓ Find other spaces in Piermont that the village already owns or could purchase for use as either a police headquarters or Village Hall.

✓ Use Nyack architect Robert Silarski's plan to renovate Village Hall. "I don't think that is the best idea. It is still a stopgap, and everyone will have to be relocated during the construction," Sanders points out

"People should come to Village Board meetings," the new Mayor says. "I love it when there are a dozen people in the audience. It is easier and quicker for us when there are only a few people but I find that disappointing. Challenge us about the issues," he urges, "but don't make it personal."

They say Girardi likes a full ball-park too.

~Bob Samuels



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In the midst of winter, we sometimes entertain ourselves with a glimpse of spring days ahead. To some, living in a river town, spring-time means fishing.

Dennis Hardy, whose father fished the river as did Dennis from an early age, recounted recently some of his best times and special memories of being on the river with a crew member, often three boats at a time to help bring in the day's bounty.

The shad move into the Hudson, in a run beginning in Florida, at the time the first forsythia blossoms appear, according to Hardy. They spawn up river and stay north until the time the dogwood blooms, about three weeks later, when their run south begins, leaving the river and their spawn behind. They may go as far north as Nova Scotia during this run.

At that time the nets would be full of shad and striped bass, he recalls, and fishing camps would be set up along the banks of the creeks for fishermen who were working around the clock day and night. The camps consisted of wooden shacks with cots where the men might get a few hours' sleep before they returned to work. It was necessary to pick up the nets every tide, as the shad which has soft gills would lose their gills as the tide receded, and the men could lose half their fish if the nets were left in the water. So the work was continuous during the shad run.

Everything changed in 1975 when a ban was placed on striped bass fishing. The stripers, who feed on smelts, herring and menhaden were picking up more toxins from the PCB's disposed of in the river by General Electric (which 20 years later have not been cleaned up.) From that time on,

when nets are dropped to catch shad during their spring run, so many bass have filled the nets that it has taken a day's work or more to remove them from the nets and throw them back, and little that remains in the nets is salable.

Now, Hardy estimates that no more than a half dozen fishermen are left, including both sides of the river and north of the bridge as well as the Piermont area and below the George Washington Bridge. These regulars include Tim de Groat, a boat builder from Stony Point; Lou Hurban of Piermont; Bob Gabrielsen of Nyack; John Cronin, a former Riverkeeper who is currently spearheading a new research center in Beacon; and Ray Holmes of Piermont who catches crabs in Piermont waters.

One of his most remarkable catches, Hardy will never forget, was a large

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sturgeon caught in his net, now mounted on the north wall of Cornetta's upper dining room. "Sturgeon date from prehistoric times," Hardy explains, and this particular fish was estimated to be 100 years old. After word of the catch got out, he was paid a visit by members of the Indian tribe who later built Foxwood Casino in Connecticut. "They looked over the fish, took careful measurements and later had it replicated in bronze," which we might presume can be seen in the casino today. A moratorium was placed on catching sturgeon in the Hudson by both federal and state bodies in later years, to allow a sustainable population to be reached.

Another interesting catch one day in the '70's was a remora, a two foot long, strange looking fish which Hardy recognized as being a rare specimen, having a sucking disk on their heads, enabling them to attach themselves to a fish, turtle, boat or any

moving object, getting a free ride. Hardy recognized it as an unusual species and donated it to the DEC office in Albany. He got a report back that the previous sighting of this fish had come in 1844.

His biggest one-day catch came in 1978 or so when his catch weighed 11,700 lb. This past year was the best for crabs, ever. The Piermont library fundraiser Crabfest held each fall in September buys its crabs from Ray Holmes, and this year was a bonanza crop.

Hardy looks forward to the time when he no longer has a full-time job and can get back to parttime fishing again. "It's not about the money," he says, "It's just that feeling of getting out on the river in the early morning and having a whole day on the river ahead of you."

~Rosemary Cone



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Mark Blomquist Dives In



Mark Blomquist. Photo by Fred Burrell

Being a Village Trustee is uncharted territory to Mark Blomquist, who was elected to the Piermont Board this fall. But Mark is awfully good at finding his way around unfamiliar ground.

Mark is an investment banker, who explores opportunities in the complex world of finance. And he's a volunteer fireman, diving with Empire Hose's Underwater Rescue unit, trying to find objects and sometimes a body in the dark depths of the Hudson.

Mark is a partner in Landmark Financial, in Somerset, New Jersey, advising people who are buying and selling companies. Figuring out how someone else's business works; calculating its future worth; and then find-

ing someone to buy, has got to be a lot like walking in mud under 35 feet of inky blackness, trying to find and identify an object with your fingers.

And, of course, this experience might help navigate the multiple levels of Piermont's wants and needs.

Mark grew up on Long Island and found his enthusiasm for Scuba diving. "I started diving when I was fifteen. I saved money from mowing lawns to take lessons and buy equipment." He dove on wrecks off Long Island.

After college he went to work as a financial analyst for an investment bank in the City. His job was designing tax-advantaged investments for high net worth individuals. These were popular investment vehicles until the crash of '87, which made it necessary for his firm to cut jobs. His boss suggested to Mark that it might be a good time to take a vacation. Mark had set aside some money from the good days. He'd just gotten his MBA from St. John's and applied to law school. On learning he'd been accepted at Tulane, Mark put a bathing suit and light clothes in his backpack and took off on a three-month diving trip across the South Pacific.

He explored reefs and wrecks off Tahiti, Moorea, Fiji, Hawaii, New Zealand, and Australia's Great Barrier Reef

Being laid off wasn't bad at all.

Over the next three years, Mark got his law degree from Tulane. He practiced in New Orleans for another year. During this period, he often drove five hours to dive on wrecks off the Florida panhandle.

Mark returned to New York and investment banking and got married. He and his wife, Amy, have two sons, Tim, 12, and James, 8. The Blomquists moved to Piermont ten years ago. Their boys go to South Orangetown schools. Amy commutes to Suffern where she is Director of Customer Relationship Management at Dress Barn's corporate headquarters. She is also an adjunct professor of marketing at NYU.

Twenty years later, after diving Tahiti in crystal clear water in the South Pacific, Mark dives in the thick water of the Tappan Zee. It is quite different in the all-muddy Hudson.

"In the South Pacific you have a hundred feet plus of clear visibility," Mark remembers.

"You want to have neutral buoyancy so that you can float a few feet above the bottom, looking at fish and sea ferns. You want to hover above the coral and not touch it—it's poisonous.

"In the Hudson at night, there is absolutely no visibility. You can't see the luminescent dial of an instrument held to your mask," Mark said. "You go off the boat into black water and

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straight down to the bottom. You're tethered by rope from a harness over your wet suit to a tender on the boat so he can pull you up if you're in trouble.

"You have to relax on the bottom. But you're completely blind 35 feet down. Your fingers become your eyes. This is a bottle, a rock, a tree stump. The Hudson's been a dumping ground for hundreds of years. Fishing lines get caught. You have to cut them out with a knife. And during all this, we're trying to recognize a target by touch.

"It was unsettling at first, but now I enjoy it," he said.

The morning we talked to Mark, he had already been out on the river. A man had jumped off the Tappan Zee Bridge near Tarrytown. He had sur-

vived—one of five or six jumpers in an average year.

Mark became involved with the fire department while talking with Chief Danny Goswick at a party and discovering their common interest. Danny said the dive team was short of divers and Mark signed up.

Mark's been in the Fire Department for a little over a year. He trains for Hudson diving with Chief Danny Goswick and Scott Silva, "a little like learning batting from Joe Dimaggio."

Apart from underwater rescue, he's trained for fires as well. Working with Empire Hose, Mark has become deeply impressed by their civic altruism and dedication. Mark's business ability is also of value to Empire Hose.

As "a finance guy," he's become the Company's chief budget officer. "I found the Department kept using the same suppliers time after time. I asked for some other quotes and we often saved 10% or 15%. Not a lot, but it makes some difference."

Mark has been interested in politics for a long time. He was a volunteer for Jimmy Carter in 1976. After moving to Piermont 10 years ago, he became involved in local politics. He's been co-chairman with Greg Toner of the Piermont Democratic Committee for five years. Mark had no interest in running for office until last summer when Chris Sanders was proposed as the democratic candidate for Mayor. The two men knew each other through personal and business interests. Chris, who was reluctant to run, said, "I'll do it, if you'll run with me." They are the new Mayor and Trustee of the Village Board.

Mark admires Fred Devan as "the secret weapon" of Piermont's fiscal management and looks forward to working with him.

Mark's understanding of the multiple levels of business as well as his involvement with Piermont politics should be very helpful in his job as Trustee. But he doesn't think it will all be like diving through clear waters. "There may be some black water, too," he said.

~Fred Burrell



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THE FRONT LINE

Better Buckle Up

The Police Department, always alert to speeding and seat belt infractions, will be specially watchful this winter and next spring, according to Chief Michael O'Shea. The department received a grant for the purpose from the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee. The speeding money will be used to target speeding in high volume traffic areas like Ferdon Avenue and Route 9W; the seat belt enforcement will be a combination of roving patrols and check points.

The department has received 4 new defibrillators by way of a state grant, Chief O'Shea said. All patrol cars will have them, and there will be one in Village Hall. The staff is being trained in their use by the Fire Department.

From the police blotter: The last two months have been busy with traffic and domestic violence arrests, according to the Chief. The village normally has an increase in DWI arrests due to the holidays, he said. Sergeant O'Leary arrested a Nanuet man in November for possessing a loaded handgun. The gun was defaced and stolen. The suspect was released on bail.

Highways and Byways

After-Christmas tree pick-up is scheduled for January 8th and 15th.

Phase III sidewalk/curb replacement will be going out to bid in the near future. It will take place on Piermont Ave. (Grandview line south to Bay Street and from house #595 to #583 Piermont Ave); Ash Street (Pier-

mont Ave. east to Chyglzby Ave.), Main Street area (Ash Street south to Tate Ave.), Paradise Ave. (Bogertown north to Ferry Road), Ohio Street (curb only), Tate Ave. (curb only), Hester street (curb only), and Franklin Street (curb only).

Firehouse News

Look for the re-opening of the Sparkill Creek Pond on Valentine Avenue for ice skating. In November the lease for the property was formally given to the Village of Piermont for recreational use. Fire Department volunteers have been renovating the small shed, and plan to offer warmth and cocoa to skaters when the pond freezes this winter.

The big news at the PFD the new rescue truck that replaces one that is



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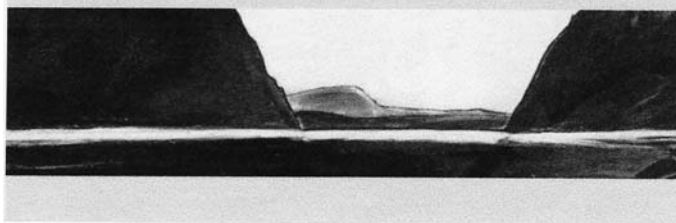
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25 years old. The 38-foot vehicle is set up not only for underwater rescue and recovery but also for firefighting and emergency rescue, according Kevin Fagan of Empire Hose Co. #1. Some of its features are:

-Electric and hydraulic pumps to operate the Jaws of Life for prying apart crumpled metal

-An electric generator and lights for nighttime illumination plus pumps for flooding conditions..

-Six complete SCUBA underwater diving setups plus ten spare compressed air tanks.

-Six air packs for breathing on land.

-Powerful air conditioning front and back, a necessity for hyper and hypothermia treatment.

-An EMS cabinet for emergency medical treatment.

~Bob Cone



Carolers from the Macedonia Baptist Church sang tidings of good cheer at the Piermont Holiday Festival. Photo by Margaret Grace.

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Let The Sunshine In

In an era of spiraling public utility costs, many house-dwellers can only dream of having an electric meter that turns at a snail's pace or not at all, or even runs backward. For Piermonters Nicholas and Sheila Platt, that dream is a reality. The roof of their house on Paradise Avenue is blanketed with 40 high-capacity solar panels that feed into the electric grid, allowing them to run the meter backward whenever there is more electricity being generated than is being used.

The Platts' house, an attractive shingle-covered residence that combines traditional and modern elements, is sited for maximum exposure to sunlight all year 'round. It faces south overlooking Piermont Creek and the marsh where sunlight is unimpeded. It was designed jointly by "specifications and to complement a site that is

near water level, with boardwalks for access in case of flooding, and all living facilities concentrated on the second floor.

The couple has lived in Piermont for over 10 years in various houses on Paradise Avenue, while the new house was being built. It is primarily for weekend use, as the Platts live in New York City and he travels frequently as a consultant and speaker. This follows an illustrious career as a foreign service officer during which he served as U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Philippines, Zambia, and as a high-level diplomat in Canada, China, Hong Kong and Japan. He is the former president of the Asia Society in New York City. Sheila is a psychiatric social worker. The Platts are in love with the marsh and the new home and its energy saving features. "It uses only a

third of the electricity they use," he says, pointing to the house next door that is occupied by a son also named Nicholas, and his family.

Because of government incentives on alternative energy, they were able to take a tax deduction on the rooftop system, but not so large a one as if the house were their primary residence. We take a look at the electric meter. It is not running backward as he had hoped, but still is barely creeping forward, so very little electricity is being used although the house is in full operation. Is it cost-effective? he is asked. "The rate that is credited by the electric utility is only half of what charged to the customers," he says. So, he adds with a resigned smile, "I'm not sure when it will pay for itself."

~Bob Cone



Alfred & Benita Ginsberg

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Piermont Newsletter Updates

For original articles see <http://piermont-nj.com/newsletter/> and select Spring 2007.

DIPLOMAT GARDENS

Diplomat Gardens Is Now The Overlook at Piermont.

The owners, Red Brick Partners, a private equity firm based in Washington, D.C., have filed their offering plan for a condominium conversion with the NY State Attorney General's office. This plan will be reviewed for compliance with NY State law and then, if approved, (this could take about a year and a half), these units, once Piermont's most affordable rentals, can go up for sale.

It is disconcerting to see so many dark windows, so many empty units at the old Diplomat Gardens. These apartments were such a lively corner of the village, particularly during the holidays, with lit trees in the windows and lights on the balconies. Estimates are that less than 50% of the apartments are still occupied. Former tenants have departed for many different reasons—leases were not renewed, eviction notices were sent, and some families with children in school relocated voluntarily, not wanting the uncertainty of moving during the school year. It is thought that 65 children from this complex once attended South Orangetown Schools.

Piermont residents worked with Diplomat Gardens residents, forming the Piermont Neighborhood Housing Coalition this past spring and summer to support residents that wanted to try and stay in their apartments. The New York City law firm of Troutman and Sanders, brought in by the Coalition, is still working on a review of options for remaining tenants, as well as possible ways to maintain affordability for these units. Meanwhile, the Piermonters still residing there, still paying rent, retain the right of private enjoyment while some renovation work takes place.

Denise Kronstad, a Neighborhood Coalition organizer, told the *Newsletter* "There is still hope and an opportunity to assure that a good portion of the complex will be affordable as either rental or condo units. We can't give up the struggle." Indeed, a great many Piermonters have spoken out about the importance of maintaining a diverse economic base for this community.

continued on page 15

Changes At Community Market

The new sign overhead is just one of the changes at the Community Market—now D&D Community Market on Main Street in Piermont. The new owner of the store, Justin Kim has completely refurbished the inside, moving to the front of the store cold drinks, health juices, wonderful affordable flowers, and snacks—including savory Asian selections.

I asked Jason, the manager, what had happened to the vegetables that used to be on view as you entered the store. They have been moved to the back, he told me, as the quality had suffered with the constant change of temperature at front of the store. Now there is a full range of very fresh produce in the rear, as well as basic grocery and household necessities. Balthazar bread and a selection of meats and poultry, and an array of pastry, cakes, cookies, and coffees fill out the new market.

Notably, there is now a cold salad bar and a selection of hot take-out items on a steam table—chicken, ribs, eggplant, and fried rice on this particular afternoon. The juice bar offers many choices. How about a “D&D special AAA Juice” of carrots, apple, beets, parsley, celery and spinach? Sandwiches, smoothies and catered specials for breakfasts, dinners and parties are also featured.

Mr. Kim, a grocery owner with other markets in Manhattan, looks forward to a bustling first holiday season in Piermont. Welcome, and bon appetit!



Sign installation at the D&D Community Market. Photo by Phyllis Segura



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Piermont Newsletter Updates

continued from page 13

In November, the Village Board voted to assess future condo units as homestead for the basis of taxation. That is, assessments will be based on the market value of units, if and when they finally do come on the market in a couple of years.

HISTORIC DRAWBRIDGE

Quite amazing news arrived this Fall regarding the fate of the metal drawbridge, built in 1880, that crosses the Sparkill Creek at Bridge Street, behind the Post Office. The county has been awarded a grant for \$760,000 to renovate and repair the historic structure. Piermont Highway Superintendent Al Bartley says that the bridge will be removed this winter for a complete refinishing and then returned to Piermont to be installed on a much-improved site. The plans include raising the roadbed of the bridge two feet to allow water and debris to flow freely when flood conditions exist. Bridge Street itself will then be reconfigured to allow for better drainage. Cobblestone surfacing and flower planters will then be installed at the entrance to the bridge, which will be closed to vehicular traffic. Stop by this summer, and enjoy the results—Piermont will have a new historic and scenic pocket park!

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Events At The Piermont Library

January/February

An exhibition of Piermont inspired watercolors by Tony Giamas, of Old Tappan.

March/April

An exhibition of paintings by Palisades artist Robert Adzema.

Piermont Library's "Celebrate the Seasons with Concerts" series begins with a Spring Concert at the library (Date to be announced). This concert series is made possible by a grant from the Arts Council of Rockland.

Library benefit event February 29th

Mid-winter Nights Dream

An international wine and food tasting sponsored by the Friends of the Piermont Library.

Enjoy an array of the latest trends in international wines accompanied by delectable food specialties at Pasta Amore restaurant on Flywheel Park.

PLACE: Pasta Amore

DATE: Friday, February 29th 7 - 10pm

COST: \$40. per person to benefit the Piermont Library

CONTACT: Doreen at 845 365 0499 for information

Tickets are available by mail. Make your check payable to Friends of the Piermont Library, and mail to Friends of the Piermont Library, 103 Gair Street, Piermont, NY 10968

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