

The Piermont Newsletter

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Police Chief Tom Gaynor Says Goodbye

Tom Gaynor, who grew up here and has just retired as chief of the Piermont Police Department, remembers a very different village. Where Piermont Landing now stands there were noisy, smoking paper mill buildings.

"This was truly a blue-collar factory town," he says. "Thursday was pay night at the mill and at least two of the bars—Dave's and Miraglia's—would have money on hand to cash everyone's check. People would get off of work and go over to them and pay off their bar tabs and their bookie. Then their wives would show up and drag them out. There would be lots of fights. This was a rough and tumble town.

"Dave's was where the Freelance Cafe is," Gaynor recalls, shaking his head in wonder. "It was a shot and beer place. Now you have to wait on line in the rain to get in the place. Miraglia's is now the Harbour House. It is all just completely different."

Drunks jumped him twice in 1978, his first year on the job as a 27-year-old patrolman. He wrestled them to the ground

"Back then there was a lot of street crime—muggings, assaults, domestic disputes," he says. "It was all outside. It was in public. Now the majority of that stuff takes place in private. We have a drug problem that goes on in private. We get medical emergencies because of it. People say nothing happens in Piermont because they don't see it on the street. However, there is less serious crime and fewer felony arrests than in the old days.

Another big change is the upsurge in the number of Hispanics. Twenty years ago they were practically nonexistent. In the 2000 census they were more than 11 percent of the population. As their numbers began increas-



Tom Gaynor was joined by his father, Hugh Gaynor, and son, Patrick for a memorable evening at Village Hall when Tom retired as Chief, and Patrick became the newest member of the Department. Sergeant Michael O'Shea was sworn in as Piermont's new Chief of Police. Photo by Richard Stark

ing there was some resentment. Many credit Chief Gaynor with defusing what could have become an ugly situation. He befriended this new community and pointed out at meetings that these folks are overwhelmingly hard working and law-abiding.

A few months after Gaynor took over as chief in 1985, there was a homicide. A New York City police officer, who was separated from her husband and was living with her parents on Piermont Place. Her enraged husband, who was also a city cop, showed up, pulled her out of the house and fatally shot her.

Gaynor was the first officer to respond to the report of a domestic

dispute. Instead of a squabbling couple, he found a woman who was shot through the head. He and a neighbor tried to revive her, all the time not knowing where the shooter was.

He began a manhunt involving many departments. The police suspected that the killer was hiding in the woods and Piermont took on a "desperate hours" atmosphere with homeowners locking every door and window. The assailant gave up peacefully three days later when a Piermont officer found him walking down a Sparkill street on his way to get pizza.

"I learned a lot from that experience," Gaynor says today. "Up until
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President's Corner



Democracy still works here. The current proof came from Mayor Ed Traynor when he told us that the Village Board has decided to "put aside for now" the idea of adopting an historic district preservation law. We decode the Mayor's somewhat cryptic remark to mean the idea is dead; that the Board is yielding to the will of the people.

Over the past months the Board has been holding hearings on the law. The proposal's supporters—the Piermont Historical Society and a handful of others—seemed to have persuaded it that this was the only way to stop any new owner of the Onderdonk House from ripping it down. No one in the village wants to see that happen to this truly historic but sorrowfully neglected building.

But because the law would not only apply to that building, owners of many older buildings feared it would force them to seek approval from a Historic Review Commission each time they wanted to renovate. They argued that this new layer of government would cost them both time and money.

The Board seemed deaf to these criticisms. At the start of the most recent hearing, the Mayor endorsed the proposal and asked the Trustees how they felt about it. They all said they were for it. When Mayor Traynor opened the packed meeting, the first one to speak was Piermont native Kevin Fagan.

Fagan is a volunteer in Piermont's Empire Hose Company and the owner

of an older home that he has been fixing up. He angrily questioned the point of the hearing since the Board had just said it had already made up its mind. His well-made point put the Trustees and the Mayor on the defensive. Some supporters of the law spoke that night, but mostly the Trustees heard again from the law's many critics. Soon after this session the Board decided to shelve the proposal.

This isn't the first time our Board made us all proud by yielding to the will of the people. Two years ago the Mayor had a plan to move the train station down to Piermont Landing's commercial area. He wanted to turn it into a visitors' center. Immediately, there was strong opposition to the plan. Eventually, the Mayor and the Trustees gave in.

Today, the Piermont Historical Society, with the widespread support of community, is well on its way to restoring the building. Most people seem happy that it wasn't moved.

In Piermont, the government listens to the people. Good for it! Good for us!

~Bob Samuels

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REMEMBERING JOHN ZAHN

Even when you disagreed with John Zahn, the former two-term Piermont Mayor who died recently at 73, you came away liking him. He radiated a warmth and a compelling rough-hewn Brooklyn charm that for many was irresistible.

People often told Zahn, a Republican in an overwhelmingly Democratic village, that he was the only Republican that they had ever voted for.

Charles Berger, who was a Trustee during Zahn's nine years on the Village Board, and later, after John became Mayor, agreed to be his Planning Board-Chairman, called him "a man of zest and goodwill."

Unlike some former Piermont office holders he continued to have an interest in village affairs. Although ill, he spoke most recently at a hearing about the proposed historic district law, urging the Village Board to retain ultimate control.

Deputy Mayor Fred Devan, who Zahn brought into politics, admired his feistiness. He remembers Zahn angrily challenging the person who had written and circulated an anonymous leaflet filled with questionable facts about the pending village reassessment. The former Mayor and the leaflet's author, who finally identified himself, almost came to blows at the end of the meeting.

In addition to Piermont, John Zahn loved St. John's Roman Catholic Church, his four children, six grandchildren, and his devoted wife Janet. With a twinkle in his eye, Piermont's Republican Mayor sometimes called her Hillary.

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What's Ahead for Village Hall?

The Village Board appears to be moving ahead with plans to remodel Village Hall, despite doubts that the proposed plan will satisfy the village's future needs. The Board spoke with a single voice at a workshop meeting November 17 in expressing preliminary approval of plans by Nyack architect Robert Silarsky to remodel the landmark building.

Plans presented by Mr. Silarsky showed a Village Hall that differs from the present configuration in major respects. The first floor would be given over to much-needed increased space for the police department, with a set of restrooms near the front entrance and the present stairway available to the public. Village offices would be on the second floor, along with a much-diminished meeting room.

In the first of these plans, dubbed Variation 1 by Mr. Silarsky, the village clerk's office would be located near the top of the stairs. The building inspector's office and court clerk would occupy the rest of the east (Piermont Ave.) side of the building. At the far or west end, the present stage would be removed to make a room for village board meetings capable of seating up to 65 people (the present great hall can accommodate over 100).

Variation 2 by Mr. Silarsky had many features in common with the first, except for the second floor configuration. In this version, the court clerk's office and the building depart-

ment are shifted away from the east side to the former stage area. The meeting room is correspondingly re-located to approximately the center of the of the building.

In both these plans, including minor variations, the architect stressed that the character of the great hall would be preserved, especially in the meeting room, although it would be considerably smaller than the present space. Asked about cost of the re-modeling, trustee Fred Devan, who oversees village finances, judged that it would be in the low \$800 thousands, with the greater portion of funds going to the ground floor modifications.

During a discussion period, police chief Tom Gaynor, who has long advocated an expanded space for police activities, expressed a preference for Variation 1 because the court clerk would be located closer to the stairs, with greater access to the police department.

Another attendee asked if the village had considered the option of moving the offices to a separate venue like the house across the street (offered at less than \$900 thousand) thus preserving the great hall and saving the expense of remodeling the second floor. The purchase of the house, it was pointed out, would be an investment for the village rather than an expense.

A professional plumber suggested that adding a third floor to Village Hall was a viable alternative to gaining more space. Resident Richard

Stark suggested that the proposed remodeling would not add any total space and would merely re-configure the present space at sizeable cost.

As the workshop meeting ended, residents filed in for the regular 8 p.m. village board meeting. Ironically, the crowd that filled the hall for this meeting (the subject was the village's proposed historical preservation law) exceeded the capacity of 65 persons that could be accommodated in the much smaller space that may one day be a part of Piermont's future.

~Bob Cone

Editor's Note: On December 5th, the Village Board unanimously voted to proceed with the renovation of the hall. Acknowledging the input of village hall employees, they chose Variation 1 of the plans submitted, with a "ballpark" estimate of upwards of \$1.25 million dollars. The next step is preparation of complete engineering and architectural drawings, in anticipation of the project going out to bid.

When the size of the meeting room capacity is reduced, where could larger meetings be held? The Community Center Gymnasium can hold well over 100 people and there is the Tappan Zee Elementary School for even larger groups (advanced planning required). Keep in mind that groups of that size attend board meetings just two or three times a year.



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Ospreys, Anyone?

If you are traveling through Piermont and see a knot of people staring upward intently, you may have discovered an osprey sighting. Increasingly, these large and impressive birds have been seen in the village, usually high up on a branch overlooking the river and often with the remains of an eel or fish in their claws.

The presence of the big raptors in Piermont is a testament to their return from near extinction just a few decades ago. In the 1950's and '60's, the insecticide DDT found its way into coastal waters and the bodies of fish that the ospreys feed on. This caused the shells of the eggs to be thin and brittle, imperiling the lives of the chicks. Since DDT was outlawed, the birds have staged an impressive recovery. There are today an estimated 15,000 breeding pairs in the nation.

A fascinating bird to watch, the osprey is also known as a fish-hawk and feeds almost exclusively on fresh fish that it grips with two front and two back toes. Curiously, it always carries the fish with the head pointed forward to lower the wind resistance. It is distinguished in flight by its white underparts and the distinctive crook formed by its long, narrow wings.

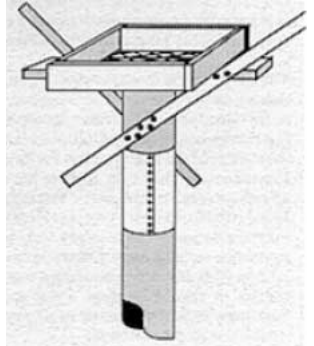
It lives wherever there is water nearby—on top of chimneys, microwave towers, marine buoys or utility poles—in nests made of twigs and moss. It rears its chicks during the summer, migrates south for the winter, and usually returns to the same nesting site year after year.

One reason for the bird's recovery has been intervention of the human kind. In many locations, people have taken to building platforms near the water that the ospreys can use as a foundation for their nests. The nests are huge, often exceeding 5 feet wide. Often, these man-made nesting sites are located on top of utility poles, and are sometimes constructed by the utility companies themselves. Not merely decorative, the platforms have become increasingly important to the health of the species, as housing development and the designation of public parkland have diminished the number of available sites.

The Piermont Pier has been an obvious candidate for a platform for years because of its relative seclusion, the unobstructed river views and available utility poles. The only problem has been a lack of ospreys. Now with the river becoming cleaner, the fishing has become easier for the birds and they are returning to the river. A platform or two could be built at low cost by the village, and if the birds took up residence, they could become an overnight star attraction as the adults are seen hatching their chicks and teaching them to fly.

The design of such a platform is straightforward (see drawing) and plans for building one are available at several internet sites. From all accounts of those built elsewhere, an osprey nest on the Piermont Pier would do a definite good turn for residents of the village, both human and feathered.

~Bob Cone



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The Piermont Station

“The new station at Piermont-on-the-Hill is nearly completed, and we do not hesitate to say that it is one of the handsomest little buildings we have ever seen.”

Thus begins an article from the ROCKLAND COUNTY JOURNAL of October 20, 1883. And today, some 123 years later, we are happy to report that once again the Piermont Station is one of the handsomest little buildings we have ever seen! A new coat of paint has helped transform what looked a few years ago like a candidate for the wrecking ball into a highlight of the village.

The article goes on to report that “It is 20 x 30 feet on the ground, two stories high, and elegantly fitted up. On the first floor are the waiting rooms and ticket office, which are finished in Georgia pine, and the second floor is divided into living apartments for the

station agent. The building is painted a French gray with olive trimmings, and presents a very attractive appearance both inside and out. The grounds will be nicely graded and adorned, so that they will, in point of beauty, be in perfect keeping with the building. The builders, the Messrs. DeBaun, have done their work well, and the effort is very pleasing. The citizens of Piermont are justly proud of their handsome station.”

As restoration work on the station was proceeding over the last year, a nagging question remained on the subject of the most authentic colors to paint it once the necessary carpentry work had been done. Months of scraping and speculating had led to no firm conclusion, when, thanks to Rockland architectural historian Hugh Goodman, this article was unearthed. That discovery allowed us to proceed with confidence, and the result is

really stunning. Paint was provided by Beckerle of Orangetown.

And now, aided by the article and original Erie Railroad standard plans from the Library of Congress as well as other historical documents, we can prepare to tackle the job of the interior. Please stay tuned for this exciting new chapter in the story of the station, and think about making a contribution to The Friends of the Piermont Historical Society to help in restoring our most handsome little building.

Note: The Messrs. DeBaun were Matthew Watson and Henry DeBaun, brothers from Nyack who were partners in a “very profitable” building and contracting firm headquartered at 28 Jackson Avenue in Nyack which erected, according to one source, “two thousand buildings of many kinds and sizes.” Both are buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Nyack.

~Grace Mitchell

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When Does It Open?

Sometimes the timing is just right. The new Piermont library had been in the works for years, but when Grace Meyer announced four years ago that she was going to retire from her long-time post as library director, ground had not yet been broken for a new building. Plans were, however, well along: an architectural firm, Colgan Perry Lawler Aurell of Nyack had been chosen and test borings on the frequently flooded site behind the video store had found centuries of muck below the surface, confirming that pilings to support the new building would need to go down more than 100 feet.

So when the library Trustees advertised for a new Director in 2004, they knew they needed to hire someone who could play a major role in helping the library make the transition to the 21st century. In light of the many new ways people acquire information, libraries are undergoing a period of rapid change; the knowledge and skills of a trained librarian were needed to help get it right. Of the candidates who applied, the library board chose Dr. Victoria Lees who turns out to be just who they needed. She has been running flat out since she arrived in November of 2004, helping to ensure that the building "won't be obsolete when we finally open the doors."

By the time Victoria was hired, the architects were at work modifying the design of the building which was to undergo many alterations as building costs soared. When the size of the building shrank of necessity, it took

imaginative redesign to get all the functions in, an achievement the new director believes has been brilliantly achieved.

On a surprisingly pleasant November day, ground was finally broken for the new building, after which pilings were driven and construction started. That was November, 2005. And now, Piermont's new library is near completion.

Those of us who have peeked in are enthusiastic about the interior space. Because of the design with its windowed cupola, the central area is bright, even when no lights are on. And those who have been inside say that the open floor plan makes this central working space—with its views into the Hudson River Room on the north, the children's room on the southeast and the adult reading room on the southwest—seem spacious. The Director is happy to report that she even has an office with a window!

Given the reality of construction delays and other unknowns, it was not possible at press time to get even an estimated answer to the question everyone is asking: When does it open? The visible structure is only part of what has to be completed before the library can open for business. There are interior details to monitor, wireless technology to set up, and programs to plan, so the new library can have what Victoria calls a "fabulous first year."

Perhaps the least of the questions that need answering is the one most often asked—and answered. "How will you get all those books down from Hudson Terrace to Chigglezby?" (Yes, that is what it's called!), impa-

tient future patrons ask, and then they supply their own answer: "Why don't you have a chain of young people stretching from Hudson Terrace, down Ash Street, across Piermont Avenue, around to the front of the library, up the ramp and in the door?" I suggested that too, asked whether grown-ups could help, and received a stony grimace. The only answer forthcoming was "We'll see."

Meanwhile, nothing has magically increased the library's budget, and many of those who have watched this project gradually turn into reality for almost 20 years have worried about personnel costs. The current library is inconvenient enough that it is never busy—except for the occasional art opening—and its hours are limited. But it's clear that the new library will need to be open much more—on mornings at least—so neighbors can go over and read the paper there!

How will it be staffed? Victoria has hired several part time ("and wonderful") students who have rapidly learned to be near professionals, and a number of residents—excited about the prospect of the new library—have volunteered and are even now being trained. The hope is that for the first year, many more volunteers can commit themselves to working on the checkout desk and minding the expanded collections, savoring the pleasure of spending some part of a day serving their community in this lovely new space with its river view

~Joan Gussow



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Piermont Historical Society Honors Luanne Henderson

At the end of October, a tree was planted in Half Moon Park. Right now it's a small tree, a native white dogwood, and at this time of year it doesn't particularly

stand out. But as the tree grows, it will fill a very visible area of the park and be a perpetual reminder of the spirit of Luanne Henderson.

The Piermont Historical Society sponsored the tree planting. They had honored Luanne Henderson at their annual fundraising event at the Castle in July, presenting an architect's rendering of the tree in its proposed location to her husband Charles.

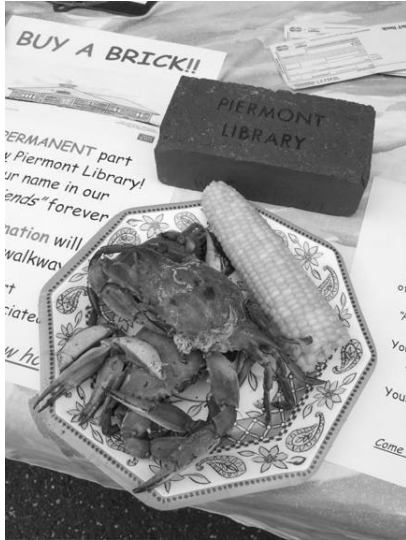
Luanne was originally from West Virginia, but lived for a significant part of her life in Piermont. She was the owner of two village businesses and her generosity in the village was well known. She was an Honorary Chief of the Piermont Fire Department, made possible the first volunteer fire department housing in Piermont and donated two vehicles while also supporting the Underwater Rescue Team. Luanne was a grandmother to ten and great-grandmother to 11 who recognized the

importance of reading in the lives of children. The Henderson family's contribution to the fund for our new library resulted in the Children's Room being named in their honor. Her generous spirit will be long remembered.

And it was in this spirit that the little tree was helped into its new location in Piermont. Dan Sherman, head of the Piermont Parks Commission, provided the rendering and facilitated the purchase and planting of the tree with the help of his assistant, Greg Mercurio. Al Bartley and the staff of the Piermont Highway Department did the actual planting in a spot selected by Michelle Brisson of the Friends of Piermont Parks.

Everyone agreed that Luanne Henderson would have been pleased by the cooperative efforts of these many different residents and organizations in the village.

~Grace Mitchell



Crabfest Still Life. Photo by Alex Crippen

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Welcome To The Neighborhood

The Village of Piermont has been in the throes of a discussion of how to preserve the character of our community, trying to identify its historic characteristics in order to protect them. This examination has reminded many of us that much of what we like most about Piermont are the tangible pleasures of our many neighborhoods. Piermont has about a dozen, and here three residents talk about theirs—South Piermont, Piermont Landing and the Hester Street Orchard Terrace hillside.

Marc Farre, who lives on South Piermont Avenue, aptly noted: “I marvel at how sprawling and extraordinarily diverse this bustling little village of 2,000 really is. Piermont has very well defined, and very different, neighborhoods. They are, in fact, as varied as its landscapes, another mark of the village’s distinctiveness. And each has its own tiny cultural ecosystem, its own set of concerns.

Orchard Terrace and Hester Street,

by Sally Savage

Often confused by lost drivers with Hudson Terrace, which leads to 9W, Orchard Terrace snakes up the hill, straightens out at the top, then leads to Hester Street, a famously steep, straight downhill ski slope. Both streets being precipitous and narrow, those new to this neighborhood always ask two questions, the first being: “What on earth do you do up here in the winter; when it snows?”

The answer is easy. We probably have the best snow removal crew in Rockland. The second question is: “Surely this isn’t a two-way street?” As utility trucks, SUVs and other vehicles get larger and larger, the last hairpin curve on Orchard Terrace is a major problem. But our river views make it more than worth while. There was a time—1960s—when Hester Street was not always plowed, and the older kids gleefully sledged down it until one teenager zoomed straight over the road and into the freezing Hudson. He was unfazed, put his clothes in the dryer and went back up! The only other Hester Street calamity I can recall was a recent spring day when a construction truck slipped its brakes and thrust the former handsome Stevenson boat house (see photo) into the river, I think we will always miss it.

There has been quite a turnover especially in the last fif-

teen years. We have far more working couples in all sorts of interesting professions, and fewer children. It has always amused me that my house number is 99, since when I arrived in 1956 there were ten homes on Orchard Terrace. Somehow five more have been squeezed in, but my house number is still 99, and the last is 136.

Parking is at a premium up here, and I’m happy to live in a neighborhood where you know that [most] people will cooperate in lending spaces to each. Always a good idea to cross ones fingers that no more than one neighbor will be throwing a party at the same time! Loss of river view is also a big concern in this neighborhood, for obvious reasons (aesthetic and value). The unwritten rule here is that if a neighbor’s tree is blocking your view, and you want it trimmed, YOU pay for the job. My neighbor used to give a bottle of scotch every year to the downhill owners to trim their trees!

These days, we have a lot of early morning walkers—with and without dogs—but even our swarms of energetic weekend visiting cyclists don’t take on this challenge. One of my great pleasures is when I spot a thin sliver moving slowly on the sparkling early morning Hudson, with from two to eight small dots. It’s the popular Piermont Rowing Club folk on their early constitutional.

I love my hill top home in the trees.

Piermont Landing: Thoughts on a Neighborhood

by Elinor Ritt

A cluster of buildings, tall and squat, side by side, all colors and shapes with big stretches of lawn in between, sharing magnificent views of the Hudson River. In a nutshell, that describes where we live.

Can such a configuration qualify as “a neighborhood?” It certainly doesn’t resemble the Queens neighborhood I was raised in during the 50’s and 60’s. It consisted of modest, free-standing homes, backyards abutting one another and lots of secret “passageways” to get from one house to another in a flash. It got me thinking about what a neighborhood is, exactly, and what is the “mud” that cements a place, no matter what the shape and size.

I came to the one obvious conclusion—it’s got to get the

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Hester Street/Orchard Terrace, 1984. Photo by Sally Savage

people and the things they engage in together.

So what do we do out here on "The Pier" together? Well, we *get together*. In the past, there were frequent cocktail parties, Halloween parties, sails on the Hudson—any excuse for a party. We were a small group back in the early 90's, a mere fraction of what the population of Piermont Landing would become—there are about 500 residents here now! We still get together, in smaller gatherings, full of good food and good cheer.

That's the fun part.

Then there are the "meetings." These are monthly Board meetings for each "entity." The Home Owners Association (the umbrella we all are under)


meetings are when elections are held. We certainly do get to know one another better as our voices are heard.

At Piermont Landing there are committees to get involved in. There is a landscaping committee, Health Club committee, decorating committees, etc. A common goal of all those involved is to keep pro-active and keep the neighborhood looking beautiful!

Then, there is just plain "hanging out" which we do really well together! There are stoops to occupy on a warm summer's eve, glass of wine in hand. From this vantage point, there are dog walkers, fitness walkers, bikers, runners, and evening strollers to greet. There are gatherings at the

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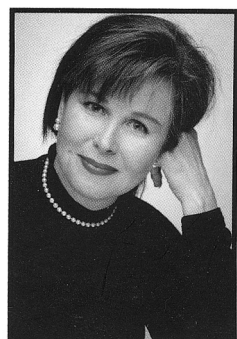

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Welcome To The Neighborhood continued from previous page

swimming pool, Thursday night poker. Pilates classes, tennis games. Whew! That's when Piermont Landing feels most akin to "the ol' neighborhood." And last but not least, there's the Village of Piermont. It is probably the single greatest reason that most of us have moved here. We contribute to its vitality and future in a variety of ways. Some through politics, the schools and commercial ventures, others by volunteering at the community garden, the library, and through the village's many other clubs and organizations.

I believe most of us pier residents want to reach out beyond "The Landing" and become part of the village. Over this holiday season, I think that all Piermonters should stretch beyond their physical and mental boundaries to make and keep Piermont unified.

South Piermont, Along the Creek

by Marc Farre

It's now been five years since my wife Viviane and I moved into our boxy wooden house on South Piermont Avenue, situated between two cherished Piermont landmarks—the post office and Canzona's. Almost immediately we found ourselves embraced by our extraordinary neighbors and entranced by our wonderful new neighborhood, which I would define broadly as a long, thin rectangle formed by South Piermont and Ferdon Avenues, on either side of the Sparkill Creek (and skating pond), and bookended by the two traffic lights on South Piermont Avenue, along with the tiny Piermont spur of

Rockland Road.

But this beautiful neighborhood encompasses far more than thoroughfares and waterfalls. It also spans (at least) three centuries, many historic buildings, four churches, numerous micro-communities, and lots of self-employed people, many of whom are also involved in the arts. (In our tiny precincts alone live four well-known visual artists, an indie filmmaker, three current or former rock-music managers, singers of every stripe, and numerous actors.) But we also have other kinds of artists: surgeons and firemen, truck drivers and professors, students and nurses, day laborers and business owners, landscape designers, electricians, writers, architects, plumbers, and at least one singing-songwriting-jogging pastor lovingly dubbed "the Rockin' Rev." And the list goes on.

One concern that seems to move a lot of us Piermonters, regardless of address, is the fragility of the things we love here, and specifically, the need to protect and preserve them in the face of an ever-growing sea of visitors and interested parties. And, although there is not always (to say the least!) complete agreement on the remedies, this overarching worry has united us as well—and, in its own way, has defined each neighborhood.

What have been my neighborhood's concerns? At the top of the list would probably be traffic and noise (about which, apparently, we can do very little) and speeding (about which we can do a great deal). Speeding has long been a hot issue, especially

around here. There have been, long-time residents informed me, periodic flare-ups of popular anger over the years, occasional promises of action, and then an inevitable sliding back. When a small group of fed-up neighbors and I started going door to door three years ago to ask our fellow Piermonters if they perceived speeding as a problem, we were usually greeted by angry assent, shrugged shoulders or expressions of hopelessness.

This time, however, the discontent evolved from individual fist-shaking at the "frequent fliers," to conversations on the street, to informal meetings in each other's homes, to out-and-out organization and strategizing, to a successful, village-wide petition drive, to the creation of a Mayor's Committee to address the problem, and—the silver lining here—to making new friends. Lots of them. And if we haven't yet had that "victory party" yet, dear neighbors, we can at least acknowledge that we made a difference: the problem has been greatly reduced, through our million-dollar police force's new-

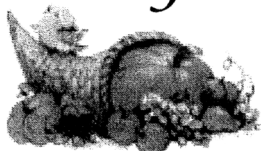
The Newsletter Is On The Web

Starting with this issue, The Piermont Newsletter will also be 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.

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The Piermont Fire Department is restoring the Sparkill Skating Pond shed—now the site of their annual Christmas Tree Sale. Join them for cocoa when the pond freezes for skating! Photo by Margaret Grace



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found vigilance at enforcement, for which I am thankful—and which I certainly hope continues.

I could go on about the downsides of living on these busy streets, but I'd rather focus on the much greater upside. I could also talk about Tallman Park, and the trails, and the pier, and the amazing birds, and the fat, full-moonrises above the Hudson, and the kayaking, and the farmers'

market, the foliage, the flooding and all the rest. But that would require taking over this entire issue!

And although obviously time (and development) will never stand still, whenever I walk into the village, I can still feel the charm, the privilege, of living in such a beautiful, unique, and yes, timeless, American small town. May that aspect of Piermont never change.

The Flywheel Creamery Piermont, New York

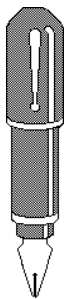
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Readers Write

Regarding Historic Preservation Law:

The members of the Piermont Village Board deserve kudos for recognizing and acting to pass legislation to preserve the historic character of Piermont; the potential to lose truly historic structures for profits sake is an almost unstoppable force. They have gone where more timid officials would fear to tread.

And I trust Village Attorney Sevastian that the Historic Preservation mechanism is the only way to generate Historic site protection (other than Village purchase of such structures—way too expensive!!).

However, I share the concern of many Villagers that an unbridled, independent Commission may go overboard in its definition of "historic." Everyone in the Village seems to think they will be subject to the law. If I read the draft version of the law

correctly the un-named Commission has the option of designating 10, 50 or maybe 200 structures—it's totally up to them.

What is needed is a brake on designations until all Villagers (including the Village Board) understand what structures the Commission would classify as "historic." My suggestion: Limit the Commission's mandate to a MAXIMUM of 10 structures, the cream of the cream of historic buildings. If they name only 5 that's OK too.

The Commission would also generate a prioritized list of potential historic sites for the Village Board to use during considerations to expand the mandate (if they wish) to additional structures.

I believe this approach could quickly protect sites in crisis (such as the Onderdonk house), but allow Villagers to understand the Commission's take on the rest of the Village before additional designations.

Greg Toner
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See Spot Run

Yeah, and I'd like to run after him!

Seriously, the last time I had a run off my leash was when the cat opened the door and I ran down to St. John's Church. I jumped into an open car, causing the occupants to exit by any means possible. When the police arrived I tried to explain that I thought I heard someone say "The Bronx" and hoped to visit my homeland.

Anyway. There are a lot of my peers that would give anything (well, not that dachshund, she'd give NOTHING), to have a place to run off the leash. Piermont has a number of perfect spots. My favorite is just past the outfield at the ball field on the Pier. No, we dogs won't dig up the ball field, or snort through the compost piles. There is already a fence with a gate that runs just in from the south side of Ferry Road. Just add a parallel fence about 20' from that, close the ends with another gate and VOILA! While you're at it—toss in an old tree stump that MIMI can perch on—a sort of queen of the hill thing.

So what's worrying you? Canine leavings? (That's what they call it in France.) Oh please, there are those little brown bag dispensers everywhere. Barking? Look at it this way, it'll stop all that barking "I want a dog run!" that's going on now.

Oh, I get it. You're worried about ME. Afraid I'll "intimidate" your irritating little pooch Cha-Cha. OK, OK. I promise to only use the run when she's not there.

So whadda-ya say?

~Bailey "the naughty boy" Johnson



Carpenter Michael Brennan repairs the Kane Park gazebo. The Piermont Civic Association built the gazebo many years ago and has maintained it ever since.



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Buttercup & Friends & Friends

For the last 20 years, in the charming grey building across from the Firehouse, Frances Pelligrini's Buttercup & Friends has been Christmas headquarters for Piermont families. Frances' store, full of blocks, books, bears and toy trains, beautiful holiday clothes, and wonderful



music has a very special surprise inside—just in time for the holidays. Space has been created for two additional shops, and the result is a most unique Piermont-sized mini-mall.

Inside, go straight back to Maggie Kraft's Bazaar Mairead. The shop, which moved from across the street, offers a lavish display of gifts from around the world: silver jewelry made in Mexico, shell-encrusted lamp shades, ceiling-suspended glass globes of delicate colors and shapes, textiles from India and many appealing gift items. Included are small spirit bottles from Haiti, a small but sure to be treasured gift.

Next door, to the right, you will find Gee, Ginger!, a new shop furnished by Mercedes Ross Kent, with vintage clothing mostly for women. But men can find a few choice items there, too. The dresses, handbags and shoes were made for the smart shoppers from the 40's into the 60's. Look to find some holiday dresses there as well. Also, the shop has an interesting collection of retro jewelry, photo albums, clocks, and, as the saying goes, much, much more.

Buttercup & Friends and Bazaar Mairead are open daily from 10-6 during the holidays, Gee, Ginger! is open from Thursday through Sundays, 1-6.

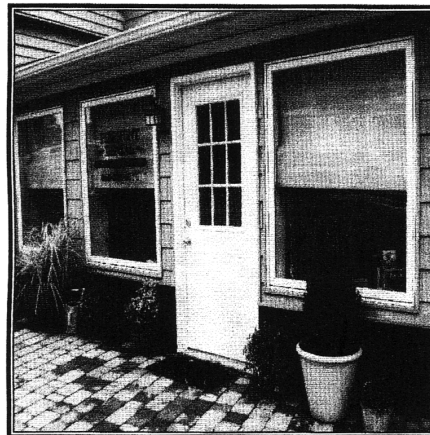
~Rosemary Cone

The Baker's Wife

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Police Chief Tom Gaynor Says Good-Bye continued from page 7

then, I hadn't had a chance to do anything that large that involved multiple agencies. I made some mistakes and I did some good things. I gained a lot of confidence from it too."

A 2002 the village was the scene of another headline producing crime. This time, mob-linked gunmen robbed Joseph Raso of \$100,000 worth of cash and jewelry inside his Piermont landing town house. Gaynor was first on the scene then too.

Five men are now serving prison sentences for the crime. Gaynor gives much of the credit for their convictions to the dedicated work of Piermont Detective Brian Holihan. Holihan is one of three village police officers who received his training at the New York City Police Academy. The remaining members of the eight-man force were

trained at local police academies.

The newest is Tom's 25-year-old son Patrick. He became the third generation Gaynor to serve on the force. Tom's father worked as a part-time police officer in Piermont in 1954 before joining the Nyack Police Department.

Tom is immensely proud of his department. "Right now we have the finest group of police officers anywhere," he says. "They are very professional, they have credentials miles long. You couldn't put a better group together.

The village of Piermont should know how very fortunate it is to have such high caliber people. I just can't brag about them enough. They make my job easy."

The Chief at age 55 seems at the top

of his game, so why is he retiring? "I'm getting older and I have to think about my health. People ask how much stress is there in Piermont. There's a lot of stress. You have to worry about 2,600 people plus all the visitors we have on weekends.

"I still like coming to work," he admits. "I still like being here and doing the job, but I don't want to wait until I don't. I've seen people who waited too long. They wound up hating their job and they left because they hated it. I don't want to wait that long."

~Bob Samuels

Editor's note: The next issue of the *Newsletter* will have an interview with Michael O'Shea, Piermont's new police chief.

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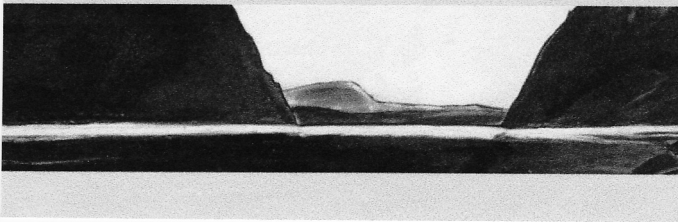
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