

Painting Town Hall

Financial Contributors

Thanks to the following people and organizations for funds to provide paint and supplies:

The Ancram Opera House LLC

Tina & Mark Aiken

Ann & Mal Barasch

Andy Barnet & Kit White

Sally & Larry Berg

Jennifer Berne & Nick Nickerson

Bryce Birdsall & Malcolm Kirk

Jean and Ron Brant

Adrienne & Mike Citrin

William Cohan

Jeff Daly

Gary Delemeester

David Dembo

Renie & Prope Dietter

Anne Gordon

Bonnie Hundt

Hammertown Barn

Madeleine Israel

Marnie & Don MacLean

Scott Newman & Greg Long

Lynne & John Perrella

Barbara Simons

Debbie Simons

Jo Stein

Barbara Stimmel

Jim Tribe

Annie Walwyn-Jones

& Murdoch Morrison

Richard Wheeler

Plus: Dorcas Sommerhoff and The Farmer's Wife provided lunch one day for the volunteers painting.



Volunteers Paint Ancram Town Hall

Local painter Jane Moore (above) led the team that painted Town Hall. Volunteers included: Andy Barnet, Keith Bendis, Jennifer Berne, Larry Campbell, David Dembo, B. Docktor, Choral Eddie, Danny Honour, Jack Lindsey, Bob Murphy, Herb Morris, Nick Nickerson, Jo Stein, Shawn Stickle, Marsha Wagner, and Kit White.

New State Burn Law Now in Effect

To reduce air pollution, the Department of Environmental Conservation now prohibits burning household garbage, paper and leaves. You can burn tree limbs and branches, with leaves attached, less than 6 inches in diameter and 8 feet in length, from May 15 to March 15, but all brush burning is prohibited from March 16 through May 14 each year. All year, you can use outdoor barbecue grills; you can have a campfire that is no more than 4 x 4 x 3-feet high; and agricultural businesses can burn organic materials generated on the farm. Illegal burning is considered a misdemeanor with a fine of \$375. Report illegal burning to the state police or to the environmental conservation officers for Columbia County: Jeffrey Cox, 518-794-8935 and Peter Brinkerhoff, 518-505-4157. Questions? Call Greg LaBarge, DEC environmental engineer, at 518-402-8403.

Highlights of This Issue:

New Playground Planned	2
Review of Assessments	2
Town Budget in Brief	3
New Senior Center	4
May Garden Tour	4
Annual Pig Roast	4



Youth Commission Proposes New Town Playground

The Youth Commission announced plans to construct a 75 x 85-foot playground in Ancram. There are 350 to 400 children ages 2 to 14 in town (from full- and part-time family residents) who would enjoy such a playground. Bob Wilcox, Youth Commission member, presented the playground proposal at the April Town Board meeting. He said the \$82,500 budget included \$40,000 for equipment; \$25,000 for site preparation; \$10,000 for materials; plus, contingencies at \$7,500.

The Youth Commission, chaired by Ruth Wittlinger, will contribute \$10,000 toward this project. The Youth Commission asked the Town to provide an equal amount, which the Town Board agreed to do; the rest will come from fundraising and grants. Bob and Councilman Chris Thomas have contributed their town salaries of \$2,500 each.

To contribute to the playground, send a check to Ancram Youth Commission c/o Town Hall, 1416 County Route 7, Ancram NY 12502. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Town to Review Tax Assessments

Chris Thomas, chair of the Revaluation Committee, has received board approval to retain GAR Associates, an appraisal and reassessment consulting firm, to review the Town's property tax assessment data. For a \$4,500 fee, the firm will sample 10% of each property type in Town, which will help determine if the Town needs a complete revaluation.

The firm will also provide an informational seminar, possibly at two different times, to help Ancram residents better understand how revaluations are done.

Chris notes that Tagkhanic currently pays this same firm \$10,000 a year to help keep their assessments at 100%.



"It was an epic experience," says Bobbie Van Beusichem (center), daughter of Debbie Taft, describing the week in DisneyWorld, where the Stissing Mountain school band and chorus performed and enjoyed the park. Pictured with Bobbie are Peter and Christine Boyles, son and daughter of Jane and Terry Boyles. Peter plays French horn; Christine, percussion; and Bobbie sings.

Many Positive Activities in Town *by Town Supervisor Art Bassin*

A lot of good things are happening, and you can learn more about many of them in this newsletter. Here, I'd like to share briefly more good news. For example, we're installing solar panels on Town Hall. We plan to meet with AT&T to talk about where to put cell towers for improved service. The Planning Board and ZBA are working on the first application for wind towers. And, I was especially pleased to see the Town Board approve the Comprehensive Plan at our last meeting.

Jim MacArthur and the highway crew are working hard to repair roads damaged by frost over the winter, and they plan to pave Poole Hill as soon as state funds are available. We got the Contamination Assessment Report on the current garage site, confirming there is no petroleum contamination, so we can use the existing site for the new garage. The Garage Committee is looking at expanding and renovating the current 80 x 32-foot four-bay facility into an 80 x 80-foot garage. If this works, we could further reduce the cost of a new garage.

Finally, we're working with the County Board of Elections to keep the Ancramdale polling place open. The County has said we need to make Friendship Hall accessible to handicapped voters or they must close this polling place. We hope to buy a handicapped-accessible ramp for Friendship Hall, and we may need to raise money with community donations to install the ramp.



Town Budget in Brief

In his monthly budget summary, Supervisor Art Bassin points out it's too early in the year, with too many unknowns, to predict how the year will play out.

He says the problems facing both the state and county may cause a spike in school and property taxes in the next few years, which puts more pressures on our taxpayers.

"In this environment," he cautions, "we need to be very careful how we spend our money for the next few years.

"We know we can't afford to do everything, so we will have to focus on the important priorities."



Learning about frogs: On April 24, Joe Hoyt Jr. introduced children and parents to a variety of frogs and other amphibians during his lecture and field trip sponsored by the Youth Commission and the Conservation Advisory Council.



Cooking up something special: Cindi Labshere, Robin Massa, and chef Alex Brink prepare for the roast beef dinner on Saturday, April 24, at St. John's Lutheran Church, Ancram.

Come into the Garden

The Garden Conservancy offers a garden tour on Sunday, May 23, at Cricket Hill Farm, home of Sue and Art Bassin, 107 Snyder Rd., Ancramdale, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., for a small donation to benefit the Conservancy.

Fun for the Family:

Annual Pig Roast
Ancramdale Neighbors Helping Neighbors Fourth Annual Pig Roast and Chicken BBQ will be on Sunday, May 30, noon to 4 p.m., next to The Farmer's Wife in Ancramdale.

Buy tickets at The Farmer's Wife and the Ancramdale Post Office; \$15 for adults and \$6 for children. For more information, call Annie at 518-329-3210. Proceeds will benefit the Ancramdale Presbyterian Church remaining as a place for residents to vote.

Town Board Supports New Senior Center

The Town Board has expressed the Town's support for Copake's efforts to secure grant funding to build a new Senior Center that would serve seniors from Ancram, Copake, and Hillsdale.

For more, visit:

www.townofancram.org
Get news faster, and help the town save money by receiving this newsletter via email. Send your name and mailing address to Madeleine Israel (see next column) so we can take you off the print mailing list.

To save money, we have not been mailing the newsletter, we've been distributing it at the following locations (we plan to mail a few issues out).

Get your newsletter here:

- Ancram Town Hall
- Ancram Post Office
- Ancramdale Post Office
- The Farmer's Wife
- The Firehouse Deli
- Citgo Station, Rte. 22
- Undermountain Golf Course

If you have comments, suggestions, news, or want to help, contact: Madeleine Israel, Ancram Town Council, and Chair, Communication Committee at 329-7483 or misrael@townofancram.org.

Communication Committee:

Sue Bassin, Nancy Bryant, B. Docktor, Mary Murfitt, and Jane Shannon.

Writing + layout:

Jane Shannon
Photography: B. Docktor