



Let's Bounce!

The Bounce House at Ancram Community Days is just one of many fun ways the Youth Commission entertains kids in our town each year. There are trips to Zoom Flume, educational field trips, movie nights, book fairs, pool parties (even in the winter), field days, and holidays celebrated with egg hunts, scavenger hunts, pumpkins, and visits to Santa. The Pampered Chef has even lured local cooks to purchase items that added funds for more Youth Commission events.

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Youth Commission Will Install Phase One of Playground in Spring

“We’ve raised enough money for Phase One of our new playground,” reports Ruth Wittlinger, president, Ancram Youth Commission. “We’ll install that next spring, and then decide if and what we want to add to the site.” Possibilities include a shaded seating area for parents and more play equipment.

Fund-raising efforts this year have amounted to more than \$52,000, plus the group has filed for a \$25,000 grant from New York State Parks and Recreation. Received and committed funds now put the playground at 50% of the financial goal.

“We were especially pleased by the results of our fund-raising letter last summer,” Ruth says. “We received amounts of every size—the average was \$100—and what that says is that many people in our town want safe, fun places for our kids to play.”

“Thank you to everyone who contributed,” she adds. “Now, please share your great ideas to help us figure out how to get the money needed to finish this project! We need your input.”



During Ancram Community Days in August, the Ancram Angels' tag sale raised \$3,047 for the new playground. (L-R) Ruth Wittlinger, president, Ancram Youth Commission; James Miller, chair, Ancram Community Days; Lynne Perrella and Melissa Sorman, Ancram Angels; and Art Bassin, Ancram Town Supervisor.



Quilt Inspires Artwork
When Lorraine Wiener saw the 1856 Ancram quilt, she was inspired to create her own art. Here (photo by her husband Eric), she displays an 11-inch square based on the Hoystradt quilt square, plus a 6-foot 4-inch square for the side of their garage. From research, Lorraine learned that colonists painted patterns on barns to protect farms and bring good fortune. Today, the tradition continues in Ancram, plus in a National Quilt Trail in New York and several other states.

Put Down that Hammer and Pick up Your Phone

Many of us don't know which home repairs require a building permit and which don't. So, we ask our neighbors, friends, family, our contractor (he should know, right?), and we make big mistakes.

Here's how to be smart, renovate, play it safe, avoid fines, and obey the law: Contact Ed Ferratto, building inspector and zoning enforcement officer, or Bill Hunt, deputy building inspector, at 518-329-6512 during their office hours at Town Hall. Or, stop by and see them on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon. You can also email Marie McDermott, building department secretary, at buildingdepartment@townofancram.org.

Ed and Bill report this has been one of their busiest years ever.



Progress Made on Hall Hill Bridge and Garage

Highway Superintendent Jim MacArthur reports the Hall Hill Bridge repair is currently estimated to be completed by mid-December, which is also when he anticipates being able to bring equipment into the renovated Town Garage. (Photo of above Hall Hill bridge decking installation by Taffy Blass.)

2011 Budget: Taxes Flat, Reserves High *by Town Supervisor Art Bassin*

2011 revenues and expenses are budgeted at about \$1.4 million. Property taxes will be \$927,000, just under 2010. We will start 2011 with about \$650,000 in the bank, a stronger cushion than most neighboring towns. Some people ask how can we keep taxes flat when costs go up and while building a new garage—how can we pay for this without raising taxes?

Priorities, discipline and common sense. The Town Board has been watching costs since last January, and we've made reductions already. Department heads were asked to cut back, only spend what was essential, and they did. For 2011, we *will not* raise taxes. We will look at priorities and find ways to *do things differently* to save money. For example:

Pay back our loan through spending cuts. The \$400,000 garage loan for the garage expansion and renovation has a 10-year term with a 2.99% interest rate, and we can prepay without penalty. The 2011 budget assumes we will repay over a 5-year term, at \$80,000 a year, plus interest. This will cost us \$92,000 in 2011. Three-quarters of this will come from savings in the highway department, and the rest from reduced spending for the rescue squad, building costs, electric costs, and legal services.

Limited salary increases and less costly health care programs. Compensation for the supervisor, the four town councilmen, two judges, the assessor, and building inspector/ZEO stay flat. Increases for some positions are budgeted to better align pay with experience, and comparisons with other towns. We expanded the hours worked by our town clerk by 33%, and have adjusted her compensation to reflect this. Raises are budgeted for the highway superintendent (\$3,000), the highway department, and for some of the more experienced town hall staff. We will change the employee health insurance plan to a high-deductible plan to keep health insurance costs flat, with no change in out-of-pocket costs for employees. Without this change, costs would increase \$15,000.

Spend less, do more, stay flexible. The Town Board will continue to look for better, less costly ways to do the town's routine business. We will also investigate things we are *not* doing that need to be done, which may cost us money. But whatever we do, it will be within a framework of holding property taxes flat and maintaining high levels of reserves, so we can deal with anything unexpected that comes along.



Note Cards Help Build Ancram Playground

Here's an easy way to help the Youth Commission build a new playground.

Buy a set of six note cards and envelopes that includes two historic photos, one photo of the 1856 Ancram quilt, and three beautiful collages by local artist Lynne Perrella.

Your cost is only \$15, and the money all goes to the playground fund.

These cards make great hostess gifts, presents, holiday cards, and more.

You can buy note cards at Ancram Town Hall (from the town clerk on Wednesday and Saturday mornings), the Ancramdale Post Office, the Farmer's Wife, and before monthly Town Board meetings.

Cell Tower Law Passes

At the October Town Board meeting, the board adopted a new cell tower law that supports expanding cell service in Ancram, Ancramdale, and Boston Corner. Bob Roth, chair of the Cell Tower Committee, reports AT&T is actively looking for sites and hopes to have a cell tower installed within 18 months.

Voters Extend Terms For Town Clerk and Highway Superintendent

In 2011, the jobs of Ancram town clerk/tax collector and highway superintendent will be up for election for four-year terms instead of two years. In the November election, town voters approved propositions to extend these terms of office.



Ancram Angels Gala Raises Funds for Our Rescue Squad Saturday, December 4, at 6 p.m., Town Hall. Music. Bring your family and a dish to share. For more information, call 398-6435.

Children's Christmas Party Sunday, Dec. 5, Ancram Fire House, 2 to 4 p.m. Sponsored by the Youth Commission.

Addition to Town Directory
Tutoring services in reading, writing, and enrichment. Experience working with learning disabled students, SAT and AP test preparation, college essay coaching, and general enrichment tutoring. Contact: Linda Pack Butler, 329-0549 or email her at: littlepaperbirds@gmail.com.

Ancram Town News
Communications Committee:
Madeleine Israel, chair, plus Sue Bassin, Nancy Bryant, B. Docktor, Mary Murfitt, and Jane Shannon, editor + layout. B. Docktor, photography.

Photo by Michael Citrin

Meanwhile, at our new Town Garage, you can see the "old" garage bays on the right with a clear story above, and the expanded space the Highway Dept. will have this winter to bring equipment under cover.

