

Ancram Town News

Late Summer 2018

Historic Farming Community Moving Forward

Ancram's Local Heroes Fire Company No. 1

By Cathy Redlich

Ancram Fire Chief David Boice is sitting at my kitchen table reminiscing about a childhood spent hanging around the firehouse when his father was chief. David himself has now led the all-volunteer company for close to 30 years. "A question I am frequently asked," he says, "is how much I get paid for being fire chief." We both laugh, but the misconception is not hard to fathom. None of the 39 active volunteers gets a paycheck, despite having gone through a lengthy and rigorous training course for the privilege of being called out at all hours and in all weather to put out fires, rescue animals and people, check on chirping carbon monoxide detectors, and in general reassure the residents of Ancram that they are safe.

80 Years Serving Ancram

In 2019, the Ancram Fire Company will be celebrating its 80th anniversary, a



The first Ancram Fire Truck, a Ford Tanker, purchased in 1943. Pictured (L to R): Ralph Brothers, Harold Simons, Guy Boice, Edward McHugh, Edward Simons, and Clifton Carl.

remarkable milestone for an all-volunteer company. From the purchase of its first fire truck, a Ford Tanker, in 1943, to the acquisition of the first firehouse in 1946, through subsequent renovations culminating in the modern, glass-doored firehouse completed in 2014, the Ancram Fire Company has been on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Chief Boice expressed special pride in the fact that women are well represented in the fire company; currently, at least 12 women are active firefighters in Ancram. Today the fire company has three firefighting trucks, one off-road "brush truck" especially suited for fighting brush fires, and one rescue vehicle.

Ancram is organized as a fire district which serves Ancram and, pursuant to contract, a part of Gallatin as well. The district is overseen by a board of five fire commissioners, each elected for a term of five years in a public election held the second Tuesday in December. Although a fire commissioner need not be an active firefighter, Ancram's commissioners (Terry Boyles (Chair), Bill Hunt, John Ingram, William Lutz, Jr., and Tom Miller) all are active

volunteers. The board of commissioners determines the fire company's annual budget, which is then automatically incorporated into the town budget.

What Exactly Happens When You Dial 911?

When an Ancram resident dials 911, the call goes first to a central county dispatcher in Hudson who will be able to see exactly where the call originated. If it is a fire emergency (calls pertaining to medical emergencies and ambulance services go to the Community Rescue Squad in Copake), the dispatcher will activate the particular pager tone for Ancram's fire company and all volunteers will be notified of the who, what and where of the 911 call. If the particular fire or rescue requires all hands on deck, Chief Boice can request that an additional pager tone be activated for "all available firemen".

Unlike cities with paid fire departments, where firefighters are stationed in the firehouse, ready to leap on their trucks at a moment's notice and head out with sirens blaring, Ancram's

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Goats on Winter Break? Regenerative Farming? Balanced Ecosystem?

How Some Local Farmers Are Working toward a Sustainable Economy

By Marie-Claude Stockl

A 60-minute conversation with Jaimie Cloud of Miracle Springs Farm inspires you to learn more about what's rocking young farmers around here, as she draws a picture of building soil fertility (something we can use in our gardens), regenerative farming, biodiversity, sustainable economy, and a balanced ecosystem. (See sidebar for definitions.) She explains those mystery words clearly and with passion. For those of us who have a superficial knowledge of farming, but love the bounty of farmers' markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), Jaimie happily shares her resources.

Jaimie's story is unusual. She "bought the farm" in Ancram (well, technically in Gallatin with an Ancram address) in 2014, after she, her sister and cousins sold the last of their great grandfather's farms in Illinois. Delmar Duane Darrah was a pioneer himself, buying several farms in a circle, so that if bad weather affected some, it would not affect all.

Jaimie brings innovative thinking to animal husbandry. The goats at Miracle Springs Farm will each be on a rotation to get a winter break from milking, when the farm sells aged cheese instead of fresh cheese. Quite possibly, it has something to do with her guiding principle, "every living thing needs to rest now and again". For the herd, knowledge and wisdom come from goat whisperer Rene' DeLeeuw, who has 30 years of experience with ruminants.

When asked why she chose Ancram, Jaimie promptly brings up her only sister, Darrah Cloud, now town supervisor of Pine Plains. "She said I should buy a farm within 30 miles of Pine Plains". With that strong hint, Jaimie looked at farms around here with an eye toward fertile, rich soil, water and biodiversity, all within two hours of New York City for distribution as well as travel time. The 227 acres of the farm she now calls Miracle Springs Farm fit the bill. "My husband David and I knew it was the place," she says, after looking at soil



analysis and trusting her intuition.

In addition to CSA cheese shares, the farm has a presence in local restaurants, cheese and gourmet markets, and at local farmers' markets including Miller-ton. There, you'll find the appropriately named G.O.A.T. cheeses, produced locally by Rory Chase of Chaseholm Farm Creamery. Rory and his sister Sarah are the third generation of the Chase family carrying on the family tradition. "Another great thing is that so many of the small farms help each other, selling each other's produce at Farmers' Markets," says Jaimie. Another Ancramdale resident, Seung Suh, now carries G.O.A.T. cheeses at the Copake General Store, so the local circle is complete!

Regenerative farming practices are not new to the area. Jaimie cites Hawthorne Valley Farm in Ghent, and Threshold Farm in Philmont as pioneers. They started the local farm and food movement that is now creating jobs in Ancram, thanks to the distribution of Hudson Valley produce to New York City restaurateurs. "Ancram farms are taking advantage of new distribution systems like Farms to Table (F2T)." Jaimie adds.

This type of farming has its challenges, and Jaimie acknowledges them. "You have to learn about seasonality. With a short growing season, you need "value added products", such as catering, preserved foods, soups. Catering at Miracle Springs Farm is the domain of

Jeremy Spesard, a graduate of The Culinary Institute of America who started his career in New York City.

Challenges notwithstanding, Jaimie affirms that "our intention is to be here for the long run, sink our roots in, to contribute to regeneration in the area, and to participate in what is already here. This is particularly important these days because positive change is something people don't hear much about."

As they say, food for thought. And a nice winter break? Yes, we could all emulate the goats at Miracle Springs Farm.

To learn more, visit the websites of the American Sustainable Business Council, Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, Hudson Valley Harvest, Taste of NY, the Cloud Institute for Sustainability Education, and Chef's Collaborative.

Terminology

- **Soil fertility** is important to Jaimie who says that "Life on earth depends on six inches of top soil." To give nutrients to her soil, she has a large compost made up of cow, goat and horse manure, vegetable scraps, and worms, which the farmers spread out to increase the top soil layer.

- **Regenerative farming** is a self-renewing system of farming that doesn't need chemical fertilizers, pesticides or other artificial inputs.

- **Biodiversity** is the variety of life found in a place on Earth. It is a complex web of diverse species that are mutually beneficial to one another, and make life possible.

- **Sustainable economy** means a local economy that is economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially responsible. To make the economics work with nature, for example, the farm plans to extend the growing season with cold lettuce from the greenhouse in late winter and early spring.

- **Balanced ecosystem** occurs when the natural animals and plants and non-living components are interdependent and in harmony. Jaimie says, "Every tree, stone, stream and blade of grass plays a part in the overall function of the farm. At Miracle Springs, we contribute to the on-going health of the forest on our land."

Vocational Education Grants for Graduating Seniors and Young Adults

By Cathy Redlich

Adrienne Citrin, the President of the Ancram Neighbors Helping Neighbors Association (“ANHNA”) (see sidebar) is excited to announce that it has received a \$5000 grant from an Ancram resident earmarked specifically for individuals who wish to pursue a vocational education or training course. The grant is intended to help graduating seniors, as well as young adults already out of school, obtain the extra financial boost needed to meet expenses associated with a vocational program.

What Career Paths Qualify?

Vocational education opportunities have expanded enormously since the era when welding or auto repair or carpentry might have seemed the only options. While these traditional trades are still popular and in demand, vocational education refers more broadly to skills-based programs intended to prepare an individual for a specific job in a specific industry, such as information technology, retail management, tourism, construction, or hospitality. Vocational jobs in the health care field, for example, are booming.

So if you have been inspired by the skill and caring of a radiology technician, or perhaps the daring of a power lineman installing electrical cables high above a county road, you may be ready to take the next step.

How to Apply for a Grant

Vocational grants are available to Ancram residents only, and the specific amount of a grant will depend on a recipient’s need. “These grants will not be based on academic performance,” says Adrienne, “but rather on a showing of financial need and a stated career goal. The grant moneys may be used for tuition, books, supplies or even transportation costs.”

Grantees need not be high school seniors to apply. Young adults already in the working world who wish to advance their job skills are also encouraged to apply.

To learn more, contact Adrienne Citrin directly at 518-329-5042. All calls will be kept confidential.



What Is ANHNA?

You may have heard of ANHNA, but still not be certain of what it is, what it does, how you can help, or how it can assist you. Ancramdale Neighbors Helping Neighbors Association is a grassroots 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit corporation formed to help local families in need by providing food, clothing, school supplies, and shelter. One of its core programs is a weekly food pantry at the Ancramdale Presbyterian Church with fresh, healthy food available for pick-up. Other programs include the annual drive to collect and distribute school supplies, and education grants to help our college-bound students defray costs.

ANHNA is also there for unforeseen crises—perhaps a utility bill that needs to be paid, a car repair essential for transportation, or simply help navigating available social services. ANHNA is governed by a board of local Ancram residents, including President Adrienne Citrin, Jack Lindsey, Eric Wiener, Mike Sturdivant, Jane Moore, Nancy Bryant, Laura Ponkos, and Jane Shannon.

If you are a neighbor in need, inquiries can be made in confidence to ANHNAinfo@gmail.com. If you are a neighbor able to help, tax-deductible donations can be sent to PO Box 97, Ancramdale, NY 12503.

Prescription Assistance for Eligible Residents

The Foundation for Community Health, a not-for-profit dedicated to improving the health and well-being of residents in its service area, can help with the cost of prescriptions.

Anyone who lives in Ancram, regardless of age, can apply if their income level falls within guidelines related to family size (see sample chart below).



Even individuals who have insurance but need help with co-pays may be eligible.

Depending on need, benefits up to \$250 a month per person are available to defray prescription costs for individuals and families.

# of family members	Income
1	\$36,420
2	49,380
3	63,340
4	75,300
5	88,260

And so on...

To apply, or for more information, contact Lynda Scheer, Coordinator, Consumer Assistance Programs, at 518-828-2273.

Summer Is Almost Gone!

Does That Mean the Deer Ticks Are Gone Too?

By Bobbie Slonevsky

No such luck. Ticks are active from April through November; and as long as you are outdoors, they are in season. These tiny pests just love to wait for you in the tall grass or wooded areas in order to hitch a ride. Most of us know we should wear long sleeves and pants, tucked-in socks and closed shoes when venturing into their habitats, but the question is: *Do You?*

The number of people experiencing tick-borne diseases in the U.S. has sky-rocketed in recent years. One reason is the proliferation of animal hosts: the deer population has grown, but ticks also now live on ground hogs, raccoons and even squirrels. The upshot is that Columbia County residents have to be particularly careful because, believe it or not, our region (counties that border the Hudson River) has become “tick central” in New York State. What’s more, these notorious carriers of Lyme disease have expanded their repertoire. In the mid-Hudson Valley they are now known to transmit Anaplasmosis and Babesiosis, as well. (This year’s media sensation, Powassan virus disease, has also been reported nearby. Fortunately, the number of cases seen annually in all of New York State so far has been only in the low single digits.)

“But,” you protest, “this time of year is made for outdoor activities,” including gardening, hiking and grilling on the barbie. Absolutely right! So, how can you enjoy yourself and still avoid encounters with these hazardous critters? With some help from the Columbia County Department of Health, here are seven tips to keep you and your family tick-safe.

Anti-tick Tactics

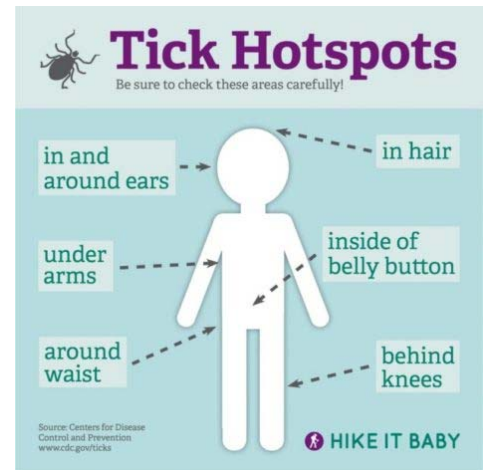
1. Avoid direct contact. Unless necessary for work or other reasons, stay out of wooded and bushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.

2. Cover up. Use DEET and permethrin.

Ticks don’t jump, fly or drop from trees. The immature ones hang out at shoe level, the adult ones at knee level. And they crawl *up*. In the event you expect to be exposed, cover up with light-colored clothing (it’s easier to spot the tick) and a hat. Use a repellent with 20 to 30% DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide or N,N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide) on exposed skin. (A non-pesticide alternative is oil of lemon eucalyptus, or OLE, but it must be applied more frequently.) Spray a product containing 0.5% permethrin on clothing, including socks and shoes. Spraying shoes offers powerful protection against ticks latching onto your footwear and crawling up your leg. Clothes should be sprayed **OUTDOORS** and **BEFORE** you put them on, then allowed to dry for two hours. You can also send garments to be commercially treated (with Insect Shield, see www.tickencounter.org), or you can buy pre-treated clothing at many outdoor clothing suppliers.

3. Make your yard tick-unfriendly. Put up fencing to keep out deer, keep grass cut short, clear leaves and remove overgrowth. Hose-delivered repellent sprayed around the perimeter can penetrate dead leaves and crevices in stone walls where ticks lurk.

4. Do a full-body tick check. Following a tick-bite, you have 24–36 hours before the tick-borne pathogen can actually transmit disease. After exposure, bathe or shower as soon as possible. Examine your body, naked, from head (scalp) to toe—especially below the belt and in skin creases. Check children under arms, in and around ears, inside belly button, behind knees, between legs, around waist and in their hair. Examine any gear you had with you. Remember that deer tick nymphs are barely the size of a poppy seed and adults are as big as a sesame seed. Tumble clothes in a dryer on high heat for an hour to kill hitchhikers.



5. Examine your pet for loose, wandering ticks and those already attached. The side of the road where your pet does his business can be infested, as can clumps of greenery and high grass around the perimeter of your patio or yard. Tick collars help, but you should still examine the animal daily. Be aware that ticks change appearance as they feed. As they engorge, the lower part of their body balloons, looking eventually like a gray-brown sack.

6. Remove tick as quickly as possible. Forget folk remedies like painting tick with nail polish or petroleum jelly. It should be removed **IMMEDIATELY**. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Pull straight up with a steady even pressure. Don’t twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off in the skin. If you cannot remove the mouth with tweezers, leave it and let the skin heal. Clean bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water. Dispose of a live tick by flushing it down the toilet.

7. Be alert for symptoms. Signs and symptoms develop in three to 30 days after the bite. If you develop a rash (particularly the circle or bull’s-eye typical of Lyme), chills/fever, headache, joint or muscle aches and pains, unusual fatigue, stiff neck, nausea or lack of

appetite within several weeks of removing a tick, see your doctor or visit a rapid care center. Remember the rash may not necessarily be at the site of the bite. Report the tick bite, as well as *when* and the geographical area *where* it occurred.

Nobody wants to share their environment with ticks. The good news is that you are somewhat in control. Take precautions and be vigilant. And remember the old saying: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. It has never been more apt.

Special Recommendations

Farmers: Despite the heat of summer and early fall, wear long pants, not shorts, when driving farm equipment through your fields.

Gardeners/landscapers: Whether you wear gloves or not, remember that your arms are vulnerable “ports of entry.”

Ball-players on grassy fields: Don’t sit on grass while resting or waiting to bat; look for a bench or paved path.

Golfers: Bear in mind that even manicured grass can harbor ticks, especially if there are deer on the property.

Hikers: Stay in the center of the trail. When resting, avoid sitting directly on grass.

Campers/hunters: The longer you are out, the longer your risk; check yourself and reapply repellent every few hours.

Hunters: Skin game as soon as possible and dispose of hides, especially deer hides.

Young children: Adults should spray Deet into their own hands and then apply to children; do not put repellent on children’s hands since they may put fingers or hands in mouth; do not use on infants younger than two months.



Day campers enjoy an art-making event at Town Hall organized by Lynne Perella, fashioning spectacular crowns for themselves as well as gifts for friends and family. This year’s tuition-free Ancram camp enrolled 65 children and was led by Director Sarah Mason, who was ably assisted by counselors and counselors-in-training (photo on bottom).

Sweet corn from Ancram's Millerhurst Farm. No better way to say farewell to summer!



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firefighters might be sitting down to dinner with their families, or at their jobs, or fast asleep when their pagers blare. Chief Boice recalled getting a call for a dog stuck under a porch while attending a wedding. "I said, just offer it a steak!"

Is a Volunteer Fire Company Sustainable?

The fire company has always had strong community support and "people willing to step up to the plate" to help with significant financial needs, but Chief Boice is concerned about the company's ongoing ability to recruit the next generation of volunteers. As Boice explains, "We have good young people in place that are dedicated and working hard to gain experience to be leaders of the future, but we need more young people in the coming years as firemen age out." Children of current firefighters, Boice notes, are "chomping at the bit" to become junior members when they reach age 16, and at age 18 they can become active members.

Still, as an agricultural community undergoing change, Ancram faces

challenges—for example, a lack of affordable housing and diminishing job opportunities for young people — that may well diminish the pool of eligible volunteers. Boice is hopeful that Ancram's volunteer status can be maintained because, as he bluntly states: "Our town can't afford to pay firefighters. Ancram would be in trouble without its volunteers."

How to Lend Your Support

"What was your most memorable call-out?" I asked Chief Boice as we wrapped up our conversation. After thinking a moment he replied, "Well, there was the horse who wandered off and got stuck in a neighbor's swimming pool on a cold day in March..."

The Fire Company's annual letter requesting donations will be in mailboxes in September. But donations can be made any time of year by sending a check to:

Ancram Fire Company
P.O. Box 8
Ancram, NY 12502.

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