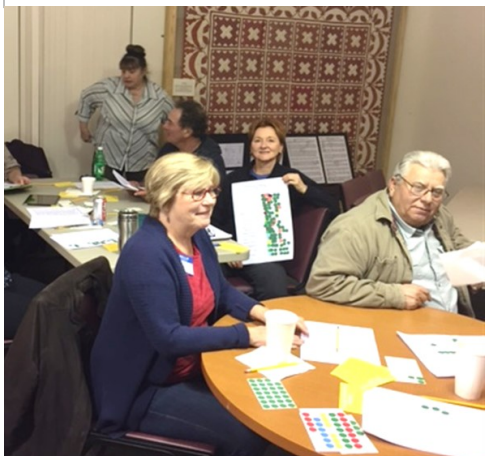


Ancram TownNews

Spring 2018

Historic Farming Community Moving Forward



Envisioning Ancram's Future

Residents gathered at Town Hall on March 17 and April 3 to participate in a workshop led by Planning Consultant Nan Stolzenburg to review Ancram's 2010 Comprehensive Plan and Vision Description. Small work groups developed a list of challenges facing our community and potential strategies to address them. The results will be part of the information used to create a town-wide survey to solicit residents' opinions regarding the future direction of our town.

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The Town News Is Back!

After a two-year absence, the Ancram Town News will once again be arriving quarterly in mailboxes and inboxes to keep residents informed on town happenings. Former editors Sue Bassin and Jane Shannon left big shoes to fill — so big, in fact, that the new editorial staff is a four-person team representing the hamlets of Ancram, Ancramdale, and Boston Corner. (See "Meet the Team" on p. 6). We welcome your suggestions for future Town News content, and can be reached at AncramTownNews@gmail.com.

Ready, Set, Day Camp!

Summer is around the corner, and the Camp Board has been working with the new Camp Director, Sarah Mason, and the returning Head Lifeguard and Aquatic Director, Johanna Boice Skoda, to assure a safe and fun-filled summer for Ancram's children.

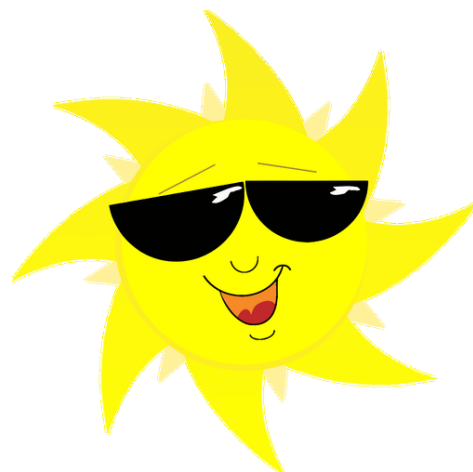
Once again, the camp is free to children and grandchildren of people who live in Ancram. If you are not an Ancram owner or renter, the fee is \$75 a week per child. But, if your child has previously attended the camp without paying a fee because you live in the Fire District, your child will be grandfathered in.

The six-week program begins July 9 and ends on August 17, and is in session Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

The program is open to children who will be 4 1/2 by June 1, 2018, who are entering kindergarten in September 2018, and who have had at least a year of pre-school.

Campers up to age 12 are eligible. Children ages 13 and 14 can attend as camp mentors, and are expected to help the counselors.

A maximum of 65 children will be registered for any given week, with Ancram children having preference.



Please, if you know of weeks when your child will not be attending, indicate that on the application. To accommodate children on the wait list, we need to know when space will be available. Multiple unexplained absences can cause you to lose your spot.

Applications are being accepted starting April 17 by mail or can be dropped off at Town Hall. In-person sign-up days at the Ancram Town Hall are May 26th, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, and June 17th from 3:00 to 6:00 pm. If you plan to mail your application, send it to Town of Ancram, Attn: Sarah Mason, 1416 Cty Rte 7, Ancram, NY 12502.

All applications must be received by June 17th.

By Madeleine Israel

Columbia Habitat's "Rural Build"

Keeping Our Community Agricultural

A morning cup of coffee at The Farmer's Wife will soon give you a ringside seat to the first community "house raising" in Ancram, a reminder of times past when barn raisings were not uncommon in our farming communities. This time the effort of local volunteers will result in two single-family homes constructed as part of Columbia County Habitat for Humanity's "Rural Build", a project specifically aimed at expanding affordable housing options for people who work in the agricultural sector and related trades.

The land for the home sites on County Route 8 was donated by Ancramdale residents Katherine and Frank Martucci and Dan Slott; and a project team of professional architects, engineers, experts in home energy analytics, and others have provided their services free of charge. Their combined generosity will make possible the construction of two attached 1,300 square foot, three-bedroom homes on, respectively, one acre and 0.7 acre lots.

What Will the Houses Be Like?

The architectural firm BarlisWedlick, experts in designing extremely energy efficient homes known as Passive Houses, is Habitat's partner in the Ancram Rural Build project. As Brenda Adams, CCHFH's executive director, explained in a phone call, "The Habitat passive house prototype uses 90% less energy to heat and cool year round," resulting in dramatically reduced carrying costs for the homeowner.

By way of example, she explained, a conventional home costing \$3000 to heat and cool annually would, if constructed according to rigorous passive house standards, cost a mere \$300 to heat and cool. These efficiencies are achieved in a number of ways, including siting the homes to take advantage of the travel path of the sun; air-tight, super-insulated construction; triple-glazed windows; and energy-recovery ventilation systems. Moreover, the efficiency of these homes takes nothing away from their pleasing design; as seen in the artist's rendering,



each house has two floors, plentiful windows, and a design that respects the area's rural character. The first floor is open plan and includes a living room, kitchen, half bathroom, and a "flexible space" that can function as a dining room, family room, home office or another bedroom. The second floor has three bedrooms, a laundry room, a full bath, and an open space that could be used as a small sitting area, home office, or play space. With the exception of the bathrooms, all floors are attractive engineered wood.

Who Qualifies for a Home?

Habitat "Partner Families" (Ms. Adams stressed that a family group can take many forms) are selected through an application process on the basis of three evaluation criteria: (1) total family income must be sufficient to make monthly affordable mortgage payments, but cannot exceed 60%, or be below 30%, of the median income for Columbia County. (The median income for 2017 was \$74,600); (2) a willingness to partner with Habitat, including providing volunteer hours in the building of their home and participating in a first-time home-buyers' course; and (3) a demonstrated need for housing.

Applications for Ancram Rural Build-houses are now being accepted, and the

deadline has been extended to April 28, 2018. Applications are available on the CCHFH website columbiacountyhabitat.org/, as well as at the Ancram Town Hall.

The Role of Community Volunteers

Volunteers are a core component of Habitat's ability to construct truly affordable housing, but all code-related or specialized work—such as plumbing, electrical, HVAC, roof installation and sheet rocking—are performed by paid subcontractors. That still leaves plenty for volunteers to accomplish: typically 4,000-5,000 hours of interior framing, window and floor installation, painting, staining, and finishing work are required, all done under the watchful eye of a certified, OSHA trained site supervisor.

Ms. Adams said that volunteers for the Ancram project are much needed, and no experience is required. If you have always wanted to don a hard hat or swing a hammer, especially in the company of friends and neighbors doing good for our community, go to the CCHFH website and sign up: columbiacountyhabitat.org/volunteer-to-build-a-home/.

In the message box, indicate that you wish to work on the Ancram Rural Build project. Ms. Adams estimates that construction will begin in May or June.

By Cathy Redlich

What's in a Name?

The Changing Identity of Ancramdale

By the turn of the 19th century, the locale that became Ancram was already a prosperous town; it had a large iron forge and many associated industries such as blacksmiths, saddlers and harness makers. A couple of miles east lay Ancram Centre (about where Drowned Lands Swamp is located), also a bustling settlement boasting a grain mill and other little businesses and stores. Just south of Ancram Centre was a complex of iron ore mines known variously as Hot Ground or Punch Brook.

Why Hot Ground?

At a time when superstition colored many aspects of life, it was commonly believed that earth that contained minerals gave off waves of heat.

Why Punch Brook?

The story goes that a man was returning from Hudson with a cask of whiskey in his wagon. Forging this tributary to the Roeliff Jansen Kill, the wagon hit rough rocks. The cask rolled from the wagon, crashed onto the rocks and lost its contents to the creek.

Then around 1808, a Hot Ground farmer named Frances Keefer invited his neighbors to a "stone bee." This was communal tradition, the neighborly method of clearing rocks off farmland so that it could be cultivated. As the men pried and wrenched stones and boulders from the soil, sometimes with simple tools, sometimes with the help of oxen, the farmer noticed that some of the rocks had a strange metallic luster. It turned out to be lead. Lead mining began and boomed on and off for many decades through the end of the Civil War. In 1838, the hamlet had grown sufficiently to warrant its own post office, and with that administrative milestone, the place name was changed to the more dignified *Ancram Lead Mines*.

Time and history moved on. Beginning in the 1850s, railroad service came to Columbia County primarily for the purpose of transporting the area's ore,

although passengers flocked to this new mode of travel as well. In 1872, an Ancram Lead Mines station was added to the Poughkeepsie & Eastern line. Now all points of the compass were accessible by rail from Ancram or Ancram Lead Mines. Predictably there was a surge of new businesses in the hamlet—some established by names still familiar today. The Niver family ran two stores; the Pulvers had a hotel. Later an applejack distillery opened.

Most of the mines in the area closed by the late 1870s, including the lead mines that had given our area its name. Fortunately for the railroads, another enterprise took their place. Dairy farming became the region's major business and milk its major cargo. Nevertheless, it took till 1930—some 55 to 60 years—before the village shed its obsolete name and assumed the rural, folksy name it bears today: *Ancramdale*.

*By Bobbie Slonevsky
Originally appeared in The Long Laker*



Mark Your Calendar

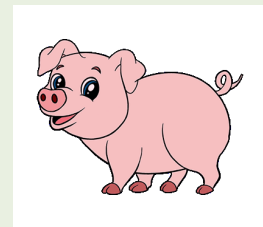
12th Annual Ancramdale Pig Roast & Chicken BBQ: Sunday, May 27, 12-3pm

Where: Next to The Farmer's Wife, 3 Co. Rd. 8

What: Scrumptious food, with meats cooked by Job Yacubian of The Farmer's wife, and sides and salads by local volunteers

Why: Have fun while raising money to help fund a tuition-free Ancram Day Camp.

Plus: Music by the ever-popular Joint Chiefs, exciting raffle baskets, and a fundraising initiative for Collaborative Cats, who catch, spay, neuter, and arrange adoptions for cats.



Ancram Clean-Up Day: June 16, 2018
Time to clean out the garage? The basement? The attic? Once again the Town of Ancram and the Highway Department are sponsoring a clean-up day. Bring those broken lawn chairs, old TVs, tires, useless garden tools, etc., to the Town Garage, 32 Maple Lane, Ancramdale, on June 16th, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

This year, there will be charges for some items that have been free in the past, because of the cost the town. On the schedule below, you'll see that it may be less expensive to dispose of certain items at the County transfer station.

Town Garage	vs.	Transfer Station
Mattresses		\$20—\$5 to 7.50*
Sofa bed		\$10 — \$10
Recliner		\$10 — \$10
Stuffed chairs		\$10 — \$5

**Depending on size*

Please bring a donation of non-perishable food for Ancramdale Neighbors Helping Neighbors food program.

Broadband, Where Art Thou?

In 2015, Governor Cuomo launched the “Broadband for All” program. Its goal: to provide ALL New Yorkers, by the end of 2018, with high-speed Internet capable of downloading up to 100 megabits per second (Mbps) in most areas, and 25 Mbps in the most remote parts of the state. So, where are we after three years?

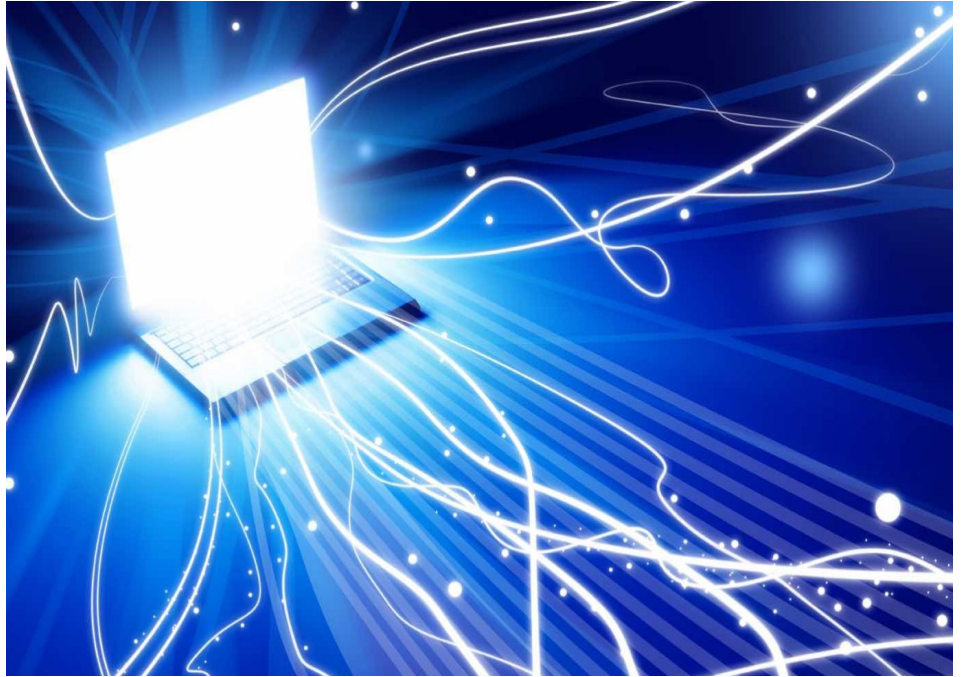
Some Basic Background

At present, no one in Ancram has broadband. The basic level of Internet speed in our town is downloads of 4 Mbps and uploads of 1. Once fiber optic or coaxial cable is laid to a homeowner’s door, that should increase to speeds approaching 100 Mbps both down and up, although practical conditions can often slow theoretical performance. If you are located less than 250 feet from your provider’s fiber or cable line, the connection to your home will be free. If you are farther away, you may have to pay an additional sum for the hookup. The last section to your home may be fiber optic cable or coaxial cable. While fiber is more conductive, there will probably not be a discernible difference in performance.

The companies currently serving Ancram with Internet are Mid-Hudson Data, Hughes-Net and FairPoint (recently merged with Consolidated Communications). Charter, now Spectrum, will provide coverage in the future, but is not in Ancram yet.

Mid-Hudson Data uses wireless, line-of-sight technology. That means towers communicate visually with residences and businesses. If exposure is completely unobstructed, a plan is now available that may allow downloads of 25 Mbps and uploads of 4 Mbps.

Hughes-Net, a very minor player in Ancram, communicates via satellite. The company has recently circulated a flier announcing technical improvements that provide downloads of up to 25 Mbps and uploads of 3. However, depending on the individual plan, data transmission at those speeds is limited to 10, 20, 30 or 50 gigabytes a month, beyond which speeds are dramatically reduced.



FairPoint/Consolidated, our principal carrier, provides DSL Internet service over phone lines. It is currently the only technology delivering an Internet signal to your door. Unfortunately, DSL depends on switching stations and performance degrades with greater distance from the station. For example, according to Gerry Fultz, chairman of the Ancram Broadband Committee, if you are 13,000 to 15,000 feet away, you may get only the very basic level of speed—downloads of 4 Mbps and uploads of 1. On the other hand, if you are within 2,000 feet of the standard switching stations located in the center of Ancramdale hamlet, on Winchell Mt. Road or in Boston Corners, you can probably upgrade to download/upload speeds of up to 25/3 Mbps. And if you are within 4,000 feet of the advanced switching station at the junction of Routes 7 and 82, you can pay for up to 50 Mbps down and 10 up.

A Comedy of Errors

The villains impeding the broadband project have been many.

- The biggest push at the beginning of the initiative was in rural areas. Somehow, Ancram and our neighboring villages were not considered rural.

- The State identified target areas by census block. If one customer within a census block was found to have broadband service, it was assumed the entire block was covered. After further research by the area’s broadband committees, says Gerry Fultz, a number of analysis mistakes emerged; in some instances, even that one person turned out to be in error.
- Charter’s existing equipment is in poor condition. This has required Spectrum to replace much more equipment than anticipated.
- The Consolidated merger with FairPoint necessitated an internal reorganization that has caused delays. Also, the fact that Consolidated is not local and is not familiar with the area has slowed the process down.
- The providers involved have not wanted to tip their hand to major competitors.
- Technically, Ancram’s zip codes are only 12502 and 12503. However, a hodgepodge of Copake and Dutchess County zips also reside in our town. This situation can confuse automated address systems and thus confuse providers.

- According to the Roe-Jan Valley Broadband Forum held at the Copake Town Hall in February, Corning Optical Communications, the major supplier of fiber optic cable, cannot seem to manufacture it fast enough.

These problems notwithstanding, progress is being made. "You can see FairPoint trucks all over, laying cable feverishly," in Fultz's words. And the company has said it will be delivering fiber to some addresses by the end of 2018. The consensus appears to be that most of the initiative will be completed by the end of 2019.

Moreover, once Spectrum has finalized its work in Ancram, a significant percentage of residents will actually have a choice between them and FairPoint/Consolidated.

What Can You Do?

It should be said that not everybody must have 100 Mbps downloads and uploads to be happy. If you are just a casual Internet user, 25 Mbps down and 3 or 4 up may serve your needs amply. You can ascertain your Internet speed by going to speedtest.net. If you are unhappy, check with your provider; you may be able to upgrade your plan right now.

As slow as the high-speed process has been, much of the gains that have been made can be attributed to the constant pressure exerted by our and other area broadband committees. Which leads to the final important point of this article. Grassroots count! And you can add your voice.

Contact your provider. At FairPoint contact: Bill Mulrein at bmulrein@fairpoint.com.

Ask why there is no published buildout schedule (as Spectrum has). Push to know when they will be cabling your area and when it will be operational. As they said at the Broadband Forum, "Be the squeaky wheel!" Keep the pressure up until we have broadband for ALL.

By Bobbie Slonevsky



Contributing cartoonist Keith Bendis and his wife Betzie have lived in Ancramdale for 25 years. Keith's work has appeared in many of America's leading magazines and newspapers.

To see more of Keith's work, go to his website, www.keithbendis.com

AOH Kicks Off 2018 Summer Season

The Ancram Opera House will present the fifth installment of its popular Real People Real Stories on Saturday, June 30, a program featuring area residents telling personal stories on stage. Anyone interested in participating may call the AOH story pitch line at 518-250-9791 and leave a one-minute version of a story. All stories must be true, experienced first-hand by the storyteller, and run no more than 15 minutes. No experience is necessary, and each storyteller is provided with up to five hours of individual coaching.



Meet the Town News Team



Madeleine Israel's greatest pleasure has been serving the Town of Ancram as a now third-term member of the Town Council. Madeleine is also a member of the Senior Advisory

Council of the Columbia County Office of the Aging, the Climate Smart Community Task Force, and the Summer Camp/Pool Board.



Before becoming an attorney, Cathy Redlich worked in publishing as an editor and writer. She serves on the Board of the Ancram Opera House, is a foster

parent for youth in Columbia County, and is co-founder of a foundation focused on improving the foster care system in NYS.



Bobbie Slonevsky is the writer/ editor of The Long Laker, the quarterly news-letter of the Long Lake community in Ancramdale. She is also a member of the

Prose Writing Group at the Roe-Jan Community Library, where she has organized writing workshops and open mic events.



Marie-Claude ("MC") Stockl and her husband Larry own and operate The Horse Institute in Ancramdale, where they board horses and hold corporate retreats on leadership development and team building. They recently moved to the 1800 colonial home they renovated in the hamlet of Boston Corner.