

## Ancramdale's Memorial Day Weekend Pig Roast Is 13 Years Old and Going Strong

By Cathy Redlich

Let's make one thing clear. No pig is roasted on a spit at the Ancramdale Pig Roast. So if that unsavory image has kept you away, you are missing out on a family-friendly, music-filled, and very neighborly get-together in support of Ancram's free summer day camp. So gather up your kids and weekend visitors and head to the center of Ancramdale where you can line up for Chef Job Yacubian's (of the Farmer's Wife) mouth-watering pulled pork and fried chicken, along with plentiful sides and salads. And this year, from noon to 1 p.m., the Habitat for Humanity house currently under construction in Ancramdale will be open to the public, so be sure to take a peek.

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Now that the Pig Roast is entering its 13<sup>th</sup> year, we stopped by Murdoch Morrison's and Annie Walwyn-Jones' cheerful yellow house next to the Farmer's Wife to learn more about the event's origins. Annie and Murdoch, and A Neighbors Network, are founders of this Memorial Day tradition, and their backyard, along with the space between their house and the Farmer's Wife, is the venue.

#### How It All Began

"The Pig Roast," Murdoch explained, "was originally conceived as an opportunity for neighbors in Ancramdale and surroundings to get to know each other as individuals – we felt the community had grown and changed over the years and there was no good forum in which people could connect." Was there ever an actual pig? "Oh yes. In the early years we roasted a whole pig – the trouble was, we had to start at 5 a.m., there was a lot of waste, and nothing to be seen of the process by the time people arrived at noon! Fortunately the Farmer's Wife stepped in to help on the food front, as well as Peck's Market and The Stissing House."

#### The Raffle, Silent Auction, and Joint Chiefs Band

As its popularity grew, the Pig Roast added a fund-raising component for various local causes. Most recently, proceeds have gone to support Ancram's summer day camp. Music is also now an integral part of the festivities. If you venture into Annie's and Murdoch's backyard, you will find kids playing games and adults sprawled on the lawn



The Ancramdale Pig Roast back in 2010

Photo credit: B. Docktor

listening to the tight harmonies and familiar song repertoire of the Joint Chiefs, a favorite local band.

Annie is a whirlwind of energy when it comes to arranging for the gift baskets that are raffled off and the many items included in the silent auction. There will be "fabulous gift baskets from the Hammertown Barn and The Copake General Store," Annie said, "as well as wonderful silent auction items ranging from artwork and ceramics to CSA shares and food baskets, all donated by generous local individuals, artists and businesses."

Another local organization, Collaborative Cats, which provides feline rescue and adoption and low-cost spay/neuter for feral cats, will also have a separate silent auction table to support its work at the event. Kitten lovers will be able

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# Who Was Roeliff Jansen Anyway?

By Bobbie Slonevsky

Even the first-time visitor to our rural community is struck by the ubiquity of the Roeliff Jansen (or Roe-Jan) name. He's a creek, a park, a school, a library, a historical society and museum, an auto center, a bike ramble, and who knows what else. So who was he?

Jansen was born around 1602 on the island of Marstrand, a fishing village that was then part of Norway, but now belongs to Sweden. Probably involved in and dissatisfied with the herring trade, he emigrated to Amsterdam where he married and had two daughters. It was just at this time (1629–1630) that the States-General of Holland was offering a grant of land in “New Netherlands” to anyone who could settle a colony of 50 or more persons over 15 years of age. Learning that a rich Amsterdam merchant named Van Rensselaer was recruiting in order to populate his vast New World tract in Fort Orange near present-day Albany, Jansen saw an opportunity and signed on.

Traveling first to New Amsterdam (New York City) and then upriver in a small wooden boat, he and the other pioneer families were charged with clearing the land, building shelter, tilling the land and establishing communications with New Amsterdam and other Dutch colonies in Delaware and New Jersey. By 1632, the farm yielded an abundant crop of winter wheat and Jansen was promoted to the post of schepens, a kind of agent operating between owner and tenants. With the post came an increase in salary and the trappings of office, including a silver-plated rapier hanging from a leather baldric and a black plumed hat with a silver band.

It is unclear why, but in 1634, despite the security and prestige of his position, Jansen decided to move on. He took his family to New Amsterdam, where he worked on one of the bouweries (farms) of the Dutch West India Company. After a few years, he had accumulated enough money to purchase his own



*The Roeliff Jansen Kill meanders through the Thompson-Finch Farm in Ancram on its way to the Hudson River*

parcel of land from the Governor of New Netherlands: 62 acres encompassing a significant portion of lower Manhattan. Unfortunately, he died suddenly in 1637 before the land was ever cleared. Part of his property ultimately became the grounds of Trinity Church.

So, what did he have to do with lower Columbia County? Not much that can be gleaned from factual accounts. Legend, however, does connect him with the river that courses from Austerlitz in the north of the county, southwest to just below the Columbia/Dutchess line, then northwest to finally flow into the Hudson.

As schepens, Jansen is assumed to have traveled regularly down the Hudson to New Amsterdam to report on conditions at Van Rensselaerwyck and to receive instructions. As he returned from one such trip with settlers and supplies, the story has it that ice closed in on the boat some 50 miles short of their destination.

Hopelessly trapped, the travelers walked across the ice to the Hudson's east bank where they found themselves at the mouth of an unknown river. During the three weeks they were forced to remain there, they had friendly encounters with several groups of Native Americans and spent time exploring the waterway. When they were finally able to resume their voyage home, the settlers are said to have memorialized their adventure by naming the new river after the official in their midst. And over the centuries, the Roeliff Jansen Kill lent and continues to lend its name to an ever-growing list of enterprises.

**Sources:** *Faber, Harold. The Mill on the Roeliff Jansen Kill, Black Dome Press Corp., Hensonville, NY, 1993.*

*Ellis, Franklin. History of Columbia County, New York, Everts & Ensign, Philadelphia, 1878.*

*This article was previously published in The Long Laker.*



# LED LIGHT BULBS FOR ANCRAM RESIDENTS

## Save Energy while Saving \$\$\$

By Cathy Redlich

**T**oo good to be true? Not at all! Ancram's Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Task Force will be on hand at Ancram's Memorial Day Pig Roast to hand out five (5) LED (light-emitting diode) bulbs to every Ancram household. The light bulb giveaway has been made possible by a grant from the NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to fund energy-savings measures in our community. LED bulbs emit very little heat, are approximately 80 percent more efficient than incandescent bulbs, and last about twenty years, saving consumers both energy and dollars. Widespread use of LED lighting would dramatically increase energy savings in the United States, potentially equivalent to the annual output of 44 large electric power plants (1,000 megawatts each).

### How Do I Get My Bulbs?

Ancram residents can pick up five free light bulbs, as well as helpful handouts on how to conserve energy, at the Bright Ideas pop-up tent at the following times and places:

- The Ancramdale Pig Roast, May 26, 2019 from noon to 3 p.m. Next to the Farmer's Wife in the center of Ancramdale, 3 County Road 8.
- Ancram Town Hall, 1416 County Route 7, on the following Saturdays between 10am and 2pm: June 15, June 29, and July 13, 2019.

### Sign the Light Bulb Pledge

When residents pick up their LED bulbs, they will be asked to provide their names, addresses (must be a resident of Ancram, Ancramdale or Boston Corner), and to sign a pledge to exchange the incandescent bulbs in use in their homes with the new energy-saving bulbs. Residents also will pledge to dispose of their old bulbs responsibly. Information



on responsible disposal will be distributed with the LED bulbs.

### Any More Bright Ideas to Come?

Yes! Ancram's CSC Task Force will use some of the grant funds to hire an expert to assess the energy efficiency of the Ancram Town Hall and Highway Department Garage to determine what upgrades would make the structures more efficient. The town will then select the improvements that make the most sense in terms of energy savings and cost savings, and use the balance of the NYSERDA grant to implement those improvements.

### How Can I Learn More?

Check out the CSC Task Force website at [ancramsbrightidea.org](http://ancramsbrightidea.org). Or, if you have some bright ideas of your own for helping to reduce greenhouse gases in Ancram, contact the Task Force at [ancramsbrightidea@gmail.com](mailto:ancramsbrightidea@gmail.com).

## Summer Is Almost Here... And With It, Ancram's Day Camp!

By Madeleine Israel

**O**n July 1, Ancram's summer day camp will greet campers for this year's six-week session. Once again the camp will be free to the children (and grandchildren) of Ancram residents. Children between the ages of 4-12 are eligible, with a more limited availability (12 spaces) for the very youngest campers aged 4 to 5.

In addition to swimming, games, sports, and crafts, kids will enjoy a host of field trips, among them the ever-popular visit to Woody Baxt's farm. Paul Ricciardi, co-founder of the Ancram Opera House, will conduct a theater workshop, with a music workshop to follow later in the summer.



This year campers will be provided a free breakfast AND a free lunch AND free pizza on Fridays. But with all the energy expended during a day of active play, a healthy snack is essential. Please do not forget to send your child to camp with an appropriate snack, such as an apple, a banana, or some crackers with peanut butter.

Applications, available in the clerk's office at Town Hall, must be submitted by mail or in-person to the town clerk by June 24. Parents or guardians of campers must attend one orientation session which will cover camp procedures and rules. Orientation is offered several times: May 18 at 10am or 2pm, and June 15, again at 10am or 2pm. Orientation is a requirement in order for your child to attend camp.

If you have any questions, contact Camp Director Sarah Mason at Town Hall, 518-329-6512, and she'll get back to you.

# No Operas, Just Visionary Theatre and a Commitment to the Community

By Cathy Redlich



*Angram residents David Robertson, Eugene Aronowitz and Susan Silverman work with composer, performer Heather Christian as part of AOH's Spring songwriting workshop.*

**I**t has been four years since the historic Angram Opera House on Route 7 changed ownership, purchased by Jeffrey Mousseau and Paul Ricciardi as the first step in realizing their shared vision of a rural theatre where storytelling—whether through theatre, cabaret or the true tales of local residents—would serve to bring people together. They were inspired by the building's origins as a grange hall, which provided a communal space for Angram farmers to discuss issues and host social and cultural events. As Jeff explains, "We see AOH as continuing that tradition, by offering a place and space for the community to connect and engage through the performing arts. Theatre in all its forms

is the best way we know for exploring some of life's biggest questions."

Already people are taking note. "Homebody", which Jeff directed at AOH, received the Berkshire Theatre Critics Award. And Paul, who is the recipient of the Kennedy Center National Teaching Artist Award and a Kennedy Center Gold Medallion, is the creator of the popular REAL PEOPLE REAL STORIES, which offers local residents an opportunity to receive private coaching in preparation for telling a true personal story in front of a live audience. In addition to its performances for an adult audience, AOH offers family-friendly performances each year. Last season a new work entitled "Aunt Leaf" was performed in a

mix of Spanish and English. This coming December, AOH will be premiering a new music-theatre adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen*.

Jeff and Paul came to Angram not knowing many people, but have quickly engaged with the town and wider community. Paul is on the board of the Angram summer camp where he provides a theatre workshop for campers, and Jeff is on Angram's Climate Smart Task Force. They have partnered with the North East Community Center to offer public speaking training to its Teen Program, and have collaborated with Roe-Jan Library and Clinton Corners Library to introduce storytelling workshops to the community. A free two-week songwriting workshop was recently



offered that featured residents of the region writing songs about life here that were then performed by community members. “Ancram has really come to feel like home,” says Paul, “and we want AOH to be seen as a year-round community resource, not just a summer theatre.

Check out AOH’s summer line-up below and on their website at [www.ancramoperahouse.org](http://www.ancramoperahouse.org).

“The performances this season share a theme,” says Jeff. “Each piece, in its own idiosyncratic way, contemplates how the past reverberates in the present.” Adds Paul, “We’re excited for audiences to engage up close with this season’s acclaimed artists, something made possible by the intimacy of our theatre space.”

### 2019 Summer Season

**Staged Dives: An Evening with Stew & Heidi** (June 28 & 29): Creators Stew and Heidi Rodewald will sing intimate versions of the songs they wrote for their Tony, Drama Desk and Obie award-winning musical *Passing Strange*.

**Welcome to the Jungle** (July 6): Written and performed by award-winning actor, playwright and cabaret artist Salty Brine, whose performances weave together popular albums with major cultural touchstones from classic literature.

**The Tricky Part** (July 12, 13, and 14): One of the most heralded solo plays in recent memory, and winner of the Obie Award, the play tells a riveting and often surprising story of one man’s deeply personal journey.

**Real People, Real Stories: Summer Edition** (July 27): An evening of storytelling by local residents.

**The Brothers Size** (Aug. 8-11, 15-18, 22-25): A tough and tender drama about the unbreakable bond between two brothers, one hardworking and steady, one just out of prison and aimless. It has been called “the greatest piece of writing by an American playwright under 30 in a generation or more” (*Chicago Tribune*).

## Ancram’s Conservation Advisory Council Releases New Natural Resources Summary

By Cathy Redlich



*Blue Heron at Long Lake*  
Photo © James Thompson, 2016

Visitors to Ancram marvel at its natural beauty and farmlands, enjoy our hiking and biking and stargazing, and stop by farms or roadside stands to buy locally grown produce or locally made cheese or sausage. But these admirers have no vested interest in our town; they are just passing through. If our area is to retain its rural character, its scenic ridgelines, its diverse flora and fauna, and its waterways, then it is up to us — the people who live and farm and work in Ancram — to be vigilant stewards of our land and resources.

But where does a person start? Fortunately for us, Ancram’s Conservation Advisory Council (“CAC”) — a dedicated team of local volunteers with an impressive combined background in the environmental sciences, horticulture, natural resources, landscape design, and wildlife — have led the way. The CAC’s mission is to provide in-depth information to the town and its residents on issues that pertain to the preservation and ecological well-being of our natural resources, and plant and animal life. The CAC also identifies activities that may pose major threats to environmental quality, and to provide the Town Board with research and analyses regarding proposed land-use decisions.

In 2015, the Town Board adopted the Natural Resources Conservation Plan

(NRCP) developed by the CAC in conjunction with Hudsonia Ltd., an environmental research institute. For anyone wanting an in-depth understanding of Ancram’s natural resources, including its habitats, streams, wetlands, farmland and active farms, and the potential threats to its environmental health, the NRCP is a fascinating, comprehensive read complete with colorful maps illustrating the physical and biological landscape. It is available on the town website at [https://www.ancramny.org/ws/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Ancram-NRCP\\_27-Jan-2015.pdf](https://www.ancramny.org/ws/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Ancram-NRCP_27-Jan-2015.pdf).



*Punch Brook in the Drowned Lands*  
Photo © Jamie Purinton, 2014

But it is a lot to take in! In March 2019, recognizing the utility of a smaller publication summarizing the key findings of the full NRCP, the CAC published a four-page summary. Jamie Purinton, CAC chair, credited the hard work of committee person Claire Arnold in bringing the brochure to fruition. Jamie said, “It is our hope that the summary will be handed out routinely to people seeking site plan approval and building permits. It outlines the most important action items to preserve endangered resources, identifies the principal threats to those resources, and provides a map and summary of Ancram’s six conservation areas.”

Copies of the brochure are available from the Town Building Department, as well as on the CAC webpage: <https://www.ancramny.org/conservation-advisory-council/>.

The CAC meets the first Monday of every month at 7pm at Town Hall. The public is welcome to attend.



Rain did not deter a large crowd from attending the Construction Kickoff of the Harlem Rail Trail Phase IV Extension on the Village Green in Millerton, NY on April 12.

Ancram Town Supervisor Art Basin joined other dignitaries to celebrate the event.

As reported in our last issue, the extension will join Millerton to the existing section of the trail in Columbia County.

The Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association will have an information booth at the Copake Hillsdale Farmers Market this summer. Stop by for updates on the Ancram section of the trail!

## PIG ROAST

(Continued from page 1)

to pet and become acquainted with kittens needing homes. When asked what else our readers should know, Murdoch replied, "As word has spread, more and more people from outside the immediate community are attending – this is great for generating more proceeds from the raffle and the silent auction, but we want to make sure that this remains a community event and that everyone in our local community feels welcome. Please be assured that the Pig Roast is just as user-friendly as ever, the music is free, and there are activities and silent auction items for every taste and purse! Bring friends and family and enjoy the (hopefully) beautiful spring weather."

### Volunteers Welcome!

Helping hands are always needed. Almost two dozen local volunteers prepare salads and vegetable dishes in

advance to supplement the pulled pork and fried chicken prepared by the Farmer's Wife. Others help with set-up the day before, stand behind the serving tables to plate the food, act as cashiers, or join in the cleanup. If you would like to volunteer, email Annie at [anniewalwynjones51@gmail.com](mailto:anniewalwynjones51@gmail.com).

**Where:** Next to Farmer's Wife, center of Ancramdale

**When:** Sunday, May 26, noon-3 pm

**Tickets for Meal:** \$20 for adults (\$15 in advance); \$10 for children (\$6 in advance)

**Where to Buy Advance Tickets:** Farmer's Wife, Copake General Store, or contact Annie at [anniewalwynjones51@gmail.com](mailto:anniewalwynjones51@gmail.com).

**Added Bonus:** Ancram residents can pick up five free LED light bulbs at the event. Look for the Bright Idea pop-up tent.

## Mark Your Calendar!

**Clean-up Day.** June 15. The Ancram Town Garage, 32 Maple Ln., Ancramdale. 9am-12pm. Certain items have a charge associated with them. Here's a comparison of costs:

Item	Town Garage	Transfer Station
Mattresses/Box Springs	\$20	\$5 to \$7.50
Sofa Bed	\$12	\$15
Recliner	\$10	\$10
Upholstered Sofa/Chair	\$20	\$10
Car Tire (off rim)	\$2	----
Car Tire (on rim)	\$5	----
Large truck/Tractor Tire	\$25	----

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