

Assessor Ken Leggett is now reviewing all assessed values for 2013, to be completed by mid-April. If your assessment changes, you will be notified by mid-May.

If you feel your current assessed value may not be correct, come in to see the Assessor before mid-April.

This would be a good time to check that your personal property card is up-to-date. Your property card lists information on your house, other structures, and the land on which your assessment is based.

If you and the Assessor agree on revisions to your assessed value before mid-April, they will be reflected in your 2013 tentative assessed value. If you cannot agree, you can present your case to the Board of Assessment Review at Grievance Day, on May 28.

For an appointment with the Assessor, call 329-6512 ext. 4.

-Art Bassin  
Ancram Supervisor

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### Feb 10 Nature Walk follows Nemo storm

Ecologists Claudia Knab-Vispo and Conrad Vispo led a hardy band of 15 through Round Ball Mountain. See page 4 for more on this Ancram public conservation area.

All participants could hone their winter botany skills studying the shape, bark, and bud characteristics of the woody plants in the forest. This nature walk was part of the Hawthorne Valley Farmscape Ecology Program.

Save April 28—next Ancram Nature Walk! More in the April TownNews.



### Community Clean-Up Day, rain/shine Saturday, April 27, 8:30am—12:30 pm

Thanks to Linda Bowen's idea, your 3rd annual chance to neaten up your house and yard is coming at the Town Garage, 32 Maple Lane, Ancramdale!

#### Free disposal:

- Furniture
- Appliances
- Metal, glass
- Electronics—TV's, computers, computer screens
- Batteries

**Tire charges: \$2 off rims, \$5 on rims, rims are free**



B. Docktor

**No Garbage, Brush, Construction Debris, or Hazardous Waste!** Columbia County will hold another hazardous waste clean-up day for paint, oil, chemicals, fertilizer, pesticides and their containers on June 1st.

### Volunteers needed April 27!

We need help directing traffic and unloading stuff to keep things running smoothly. Questions or to volunteer, contact Jim at [jmackancramhwy@hotmail.com](mailto:jmackancramhwy@hotmail.com), 329-6190, or Art at [abassin@aol.com](mailto:abassin@aol.com), 329-0921.

### High School Civics Class Spurs Ancram Student Dialogs

Mr. Schoonmaker's "Participation in Government" class at Stissing Mountain High School asks students to contact a public official who represents them about an issue of importance. Since 2010, Art has had nine questions, five in 2012 alone! Each student gets a detailed response.

Roads were chosen by four students. "As a newly licensed driver, I have an interest in road safety," wrote **Carl Jamieson**. He and **Anna Woodward** asked about the Route 82 and Route 7 intersection in Ancram. **Alexander Graczkowski** worries about Pulver Road. "[It's] very pleasant and picturesque but as it lies between the fields it gets fogged up pretty often to the point that there is no way of knowing where the road ends and the field begins." Alex suggested painting lines on the sides of the road. **Alex Puris** asked about the flooding on Wiltsie Bridge Road by the bridge just past Herondale.

**Chrissy Boyles** was interested in the town pool. **Alejandro Ayala** and **Nolan Harpp** both asked about cell tower service. **Klaudyna Graczkowski** asked about the wind turbine noise problem. **Mathew Mason** wondered about the tax assessment process. Art's comment: "My first question to *their* question is 'When's this project due?'"



## Citizens' Group Rallies to Provide Upgrades to New Firehouse

The Firehouse has always played a major role in the history, character and personality of Ancram. And now, with the new extension to be built in 2013, it becomes even more important, doubling its size to house the Fire Company's five trucks without having to double park, and the firefighters' large quantities of equipment.

"This building will express the pride we take in our town, our community and our extraordinary volunteer firefighters," says Jennifer Berne, speaking for **Friends of the Firehouse**.

The Firehouse Building Committee worked for 5 years to finalize the design. "We had to elimi-

nate some things to keep the cost to taxpayers as low as possible," says Fire Chief David Boice. Now, Friends of the Firehouse are raising money to add three upgrades, with the unanimous approval of the Fire District Commissioners in their vote taken February 12.



### **Join Friends of the Firehouse!**

**Donate Now**

**so materials can be ordered in time!**

We need **\$57,000** to make these three upgrades to our new Firehouse:

- ~ **fire truck water refill system—\$12,500**
- ~ **traditional glass paneled doors—\$22,000**
- ~ **light tan siding—removal/replacement of siding on existing Firehouse—\$20,000**
- ~ Contingencies \$2,500

*Help show the pride we have in our town!*

*Help us express how much we value the crucial, selfless service we get from our Firefighters in our most vulnerable times!*

Make checks payable to:

**AFC Friends of the Firehouse**

Send checks to:

**Friends of the Firehouse**

**PO Box 104, Ancram NY 12502.**

*Thanks for whatever you can give, large or small. Deadline March 31, 2013. Donations are tax deductible to the extent of the law.*

**Fire Truck Water Refill System.** Now, after a fire, no matter the hour or weather, our Firefighters have to go down to the Roe Jan Kill, attach their hoses to a dry hydrant to fill their trucks. This takes time and effort and lengthens the turnaround time for a major fire. So, add a 7,500 gallon tank and a water pumping system so the fire trucks can be refilled while inside the new building.

**Traditional Glass Paneled Doors.** Historically, firehouse doors in New York and New England had glass panels, including our own back in the 1960's! The glass doors proudly display the fire trucks and equipment used to save our homes and lives, and the daylight makes working inside far better and reduces electricity.

**Light Tan Siding.** One other upgrade is light tan siding throughout, including residing the old firehouse.

"The Firehouse looks exceptional," says David. "I think it'll add to Company pride, camaraderie and maybe help recruitment."

Jennifer adds, "Ancram will be forever better for this effort. This gift will be appreciated every time you, and all of us, drive through the center of our very special town."





Our Comprehensive Plan found that over 90% of residents rank preserving the environment as very important to them—water, woods, wildlife.

So, in January 2010, the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) was set up to advise the Town Board on the environmental impact of proposed land-use matters. CACs are based on NYS law.



The CAC conducts research, coordinates educational programs, writes papers, and advises the Town Board and other agencies in the management, development and conservation of the town's natural resources. The CAC maintains an in-depth data base for issues that pertain to the preservation and well-being of the town's flora and fauna. The CAC's mission is also to identify activities or developments that may pose major threats to environmental quality. Our CAC is also developing a Natural Resources Plan for the town.

Ancram is fortunate to have such an accomplished team, a model for other towns. Widely recognized as a leader, they were featured speakers at the county-wide roundtable, 2/27.

CAC meets the first Monday each month at 7 pm in Town Hall. Meetings open to public.

## CAC Members

*Jamie Purinton, Chair  
landscape architect,  
Planning Board*

*David Dembo, Vice Chair  
researcher, writer,  
organic farmer*

*Choral Eddie  
environmental studies,  
biodiversity mapping*

*Jane Meigs  
environmental science  
researcher & educator*

*Joe Hoyt, Jr.  
B.Tech. wildlife mgmt,  
birds, amphibians,  
reptiles*

*Erin Robertson  
landscape designer,  
Planning Board*

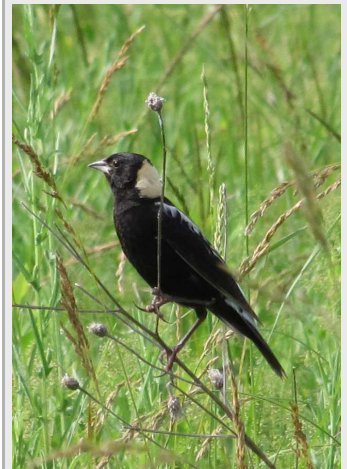
*Colleen Lutz  
aquatic biology,  
invertebrates, GIS*

*Andrea Barnett  
writer, envir. researcher*

*Andrew Wilcox  
organic farmer*

*Samantha Langton  
PhD geology, hydrology,  
climate change*

*Contact Jamie for information about the CAC or become a member. 329-2337  
jamiepurinton@fairpoint.net*



Bobolinks eat larva, insects, and spiders during breeding season. Conrad Vispo photo.



## Make All the Meadows You Can Make!

*Big Meadows in the Fields....Little Meadows by the House*



### Help the Grassland Birds

Grassland birds, like bobolinks, Eastern meadowlarks, grasshopper and vesper sparrows, and upland sandpipers eat insects and so, limit increases of grasshoppers, caterpillars, weevils, cutworms, beetles, and flies.

"We can help grassland birds nest and successfully raise their young by delaying mowing until mid July," says Jane Meigs, CAC member and wildlife educator. "Stable bird populations lead to a healthy balance of species," Jane adds.

In New York, many grassland birds are declining due to loss of grassland

habitat. Later mowing encourages them to return to nest in fields where they have successfully reproduced.

For fields which are mowed once a year and where timing isn't important, it is best for wildlife habitat to delay mowing until late fall or early spring in order to provide a late season food source of seed as well as winter cover.

Birds add to biodiversity and promote the health of our ecosystem. By mowing later, it is possible to maintain the beauty and agricultural productivity of grasslands while increasing habitat for these beneficial migratory birds.

#### Basics of grassland bird habitat management:

- Maintain large continuous blocks (20+ acres of open grassland ranging 4-30 inches in height)
- Do not disturb through breeding season, May through mid-July
- Reduce or eliminate herbicides

*Funding available to landowners and farmers who delay mowing to benefit wildlife.*

*Contact USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (518-828-4385). Ask about their Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program.*

[\(http://www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/\)](http://www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/)



## TownNews

Got some news?  
Contact Art Bassin  
Town Supervisor  
329-0921  
[abassin@aol.com](mailto:abassin@aol.com)

Getting your news by email saves the town money and keeps you more up-to-date.  
Contact Madeleine Israel to make the change,  
329-7483  
[airjazz@taconic.net](mailto:airjazz@taconic.net)

Lucky for us, Ancram has two public conservation areas, Round Ball Mountain and Drowned Lands Swamp or Old Croken, managed by the Columbia Land Conservancy (CLC).

Open year-round, dawn-to-dusk, and free to the public, they are like parks, providing protection for both recreation and wildlife.

Round Ball Mountain is now expanded from 105 acres to 415 acres by gifts of Ancram residents Woody and Saida Baxt, and Elizabeth Gilmore.

Map, pictures courtesy of CLC.  
For more, go to  
[clctrust.org/public-conservation-areas](http://clctrust.org/public-conservation-areas)



Hundreds of years ago, sheep grazed on these picturesque and historic fields bounded by stonewalls. This view is taken from the Baxt property looking east across Route 22 and the Harlem Valley to the Taconic Berkshire Mountains and Taconic State Park. Columbia Land Conservancy photo.

### Ancram Landowners Donate 310 Acres to Expand Round Ball Mountain

**"Thanks to the generosity of Elizabeth Gilmore and Woody and Saida Baxt,** Ancram preserves a critical wildlife corridor and gains a wonderful ridgeline public trail!" says **Jamie Purinton**, head of Ancram's Conservation Advisory Council (CAC).

"The residents of Ancram are so fortunate to have these good neighbors," says Jamie. "With the fantastic efforts of the Columbia Land Conservancy who has received the donation, and the thorough review of our Planning Board, we all now have access to these beautiful natural resource areas."

These landowners were motivated to donate these parcels by their desire to expand public access to scenic lands. "I thought it was an amazing amenity for this corner of the county to have Round Ball Mountain Conservation Area open to the public," says **Elizabeth Gilmore**. "Then I thought how much *better* it would be if a trail could be developed from there north along the ridge to increase the beautiful views of the mountains, farmland, and wildlife."

"Why give away a third of our farm?" asks **Woody Baxt**. "Because now, thanks to the Columbia Land Conservancy (CLC), the public will always have access to this property. It links 415 acres of publically accessible lands along a magnificent ridgeline."

Woody adds, "We consider ourselves extremely lucky to participate in something like this, a legacy we can all be proud of."

The CLC will begin its planning and construction of the 4-5 mile trail along the ridgeline, starting in the spring. "We are happy to have residents join with us in the planning and construction," says **Tony Colyer-Pendas**, CLC's Director of Conservation Programs.

Interested in helping? Contact Jamie Purinton to join in our CAC trail efforts, working with CLC on this wonderful project. 518-329-2337

