

Two New Town Committees

The Ancram Town Board has established a Recreation Planning Group to determine town needs and develop a long-term plan by the end of 2012, and an Intersection Advisory Committee to improve safety at routes 82/7. If you'd like to help, let Art Bassin know (518-329-0921).



Thanks to your generosity and tax-deductible contributions, Neighbors looks forward to serving a variety of local needs in 2012, including a new "backpack" program to provide weekend food for children in need. Contact any Neighbors board member to learn more: Nancy Bryant, Adrienne Citrin, Jack Lindsey, Jane Shannon, and Eric Wiener.

Hugh Clark Joins Town Board

On January 1, Hugh Clark joined the Ancram Town Board as a councilman. He also serves as chair of the town's Zoning Revisions Committee and previously served on the Comprehensive Plan Committee.



Ancram Fire Company members (left to right) Josh Brazie, Tom Dias, and Lisa Funk march in the Columbia County Firemen's Convention parade.

2011 in Review *by Town Supervisor Art Bassin*

Our town finances are in good shape. Property taxes remained flat, and we have budgeted flat property taxes for this year. The Town ended 2011 with more than \$500,000 in the bank. We also adopted an employee handbook and a financial management manual with processes and procedures to help get things done with careful financial planning and controlled spending.

Investments in the Highway Department are paying off. We started 2011 with an open house for the community to celebrate the renovated and expanded garage. During 2011, we invested about \$200,000 in new equipment and facilities, including a new front-end loader, two "new" used plow trucks, and an automatic generator. We converted the Borden's milk factory building into a salt shed, at one-third the cost of a new salt shed, protecting the environment from leaching salt. All this helps improve our highway department's effectiveness and helps control highway department costs. We have protected the antique milk scales that have been in the milk factory building for the last 100 years, and hope to find a way to display these scales as part of celebrating the garage as a "historic site" at some point. And in November, Neighbors Helping Neighbors hosted a potluck dinner party in the new garage.

Additional 2011 highlights include:

- The Town Board adopted two batches of zoning revisions recommended by the Zoning Revisions Committee;
- Eagle Scout candidate Carl Jamieson built a commemorative stone walkway around the flagpole at Town Hall;

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2011 was a Busy Year for Ancram Fire Company

By Ancram Fire Chief David Boice



Tom Miller, left, and David Boice



John MacArthur



Ron Van Tassel



Will and Katie Lutz

In 2011, we were dispatched to 163 emergency calls, a slightly higher total than normal, caused to some degree by three extended power outages in Southern Columbia County. We typically have one such outage every three years or so.

I hope everyone who put in emergency generators as a result of these storms had them installed correctly and safely. During these extended power outages, we make the firehouse available to anyone who may need a restroom, water, or a cup of coffee. We also have served some warm meals during these extended periods and we've made the firehouse available to Central Hudson crews as well.

Here's a breakdown of the hours contributed by our volunteers in 2011:

| Activity | Hours |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Emergency Response | 1,918.27 |
| Training and Drill | 707.95 |
| Meetings/Committees | 521.82 |
| Work Detail | 751.60 |
| Fundraisers/Parades | 1,354.00 |
| Total | 5,253.64 |

The Company hosted the Memorial Day Parade, and for the fourth time in our history, we also hosted the Columbia County Firemen's Convention. We hold a variety of fundraisers throughout the year, and we're involved with fire prevention programs in several school districts – we're one of the founding members of the Taconic Hills Fire Prevention Association.

We're also involved in many community events – our next will be a Chicken BBQ, on Feb. 25, with continuous serving from 4 to 7 p.m. at the firehouse.

We're always looking for more volunteer members, so if you're willing to drop what you're doing at a moment's notice, regardless of the time of day or weather conditions, for no pay, we've got a spot for you!

Not everyone has to be willing or trained to go into a burning building. In fact, you don't even need to be interested in, or involved in, emergency responses. Social members serve as a big part of our fundraising, community events, and everyday operations. If you're interested, please call me at 518-329-3430.

The Ancram Fire Company wishes you all a happy and safe New Year.

2011 in Review by Art Bassin (*continued from page one*)

- Columbia County decided to buy the Tin Smith house at routes 82/7 to improve traffic safety at that intersection;
- The Youth Commission raised funds for and built a playground at Town Hall;
- We hosted a kid's summer camp, using the swimming pool at Blass Park and the new playground at Town Hall to offer six weeks of fun for Ancram's youngsters; and
- The Ancram Fire Company hosted the annual Columbia County Volunteer Firefighter's Association Convention and parade.

Volunteers deserve our gratitude. As a community, we are fortunate to have many residents willing to donate their time, talents and money to make the town a better place. We all owe a great deal to the 75 volunteers who serve on our boards, councils and committees. We're lucky to have the active congregations at the Ancramdale Presbyterian Church and St. John's Lutheran Church in Ancram – both contribute enormously to our community, as do volunteer social service groups – such as Neighbors Helping Neighbors, the Ancram Angels, the Neighbors Network, Ancram Preservation Group, and the Landowners' Association.

We owe a special thanks to, and can take a special pride in those men and women who serve as volunteer firefighters with the Ancram Fire Company, which has over 70 members and 46 active firefighters. The Ancram Fire Company's firefighters not only fight fires, but are here for us when the power goes out and we need generators to have power, when our basements get flooded and need pumping out, when we have accidents, and when we need help from the emergency rescue squad.

You helped us set priorities for 2012. We want to maintain our town's financial strength by carefully spending on important, necessary projects while we build our financial reserve funds for unexpected future contingencies. We want to build cell towers in locations that meet the requirements of our cell tower law, and provide better cell service to all parts of Town. We want to improve traffic safety at the intersection of routes 82/7. We want to finish revising our zoning laws to bring them into compliance with our Comprehensive Plan. And we want to better communicate the requirements of our new zoning laws and the NYS Building Code, and become more disciplined about enforcing compliance.

I wish you all a very Happy New Year. I appreciate your continued support, and I look forward to serving you in 2012.

Art



Photo by Sue Bassin

Columbia Land Conservancy Expands Services

Peter Paden, executive director of the Columbia Land Conservancy (CLC), explains how CLC's services have expanded during its 25-year history. For example, CLC matches people who own farmable land with people who want to farm. "Like marriages, some of these matches work out, and some don't," Peter notes of the 15 matches made in the past 18 months, putting 500 acres back into productive use. He's heard from people in Oregon, Texas, and California who want to come here to farm. CLC also maintains 10 public parks (two in Ancram) at a cost of some \$10,000 to \$15,000 each per year. More than 33,000 people visit these parks annually. CLC also provides educational programs – more than 3,000 people participated in these in 2011. To learn more, visit the group at: www.clctrust.org.



In 2011, Ruth Thomas created the Ancram Kid's Camp, and money donated from community groups provided scholarships for local children...



...and Ancram Angels honored Bob Murphy and Jack Lindsey as Angels of the Year for their many contributions to making this a great place to live.

Buy Local

The Ancram Directory was revised October 2011. Pick up a copy at Town Hall to support local farms and businesses.

Town Board Meeting,

Thursday, Feb. 16, 7 p.m. at Ancram Town Hall.

Chicken BBQ, Saturday, Feb. 25, from 4 to 7 p.m., Ancram Firehouse. Call 329-3430 for reservations.

Get News Faster: To receive town information by email and save the town money, send your name, mailing address, and email address to Councilwoman Madeleine Israel at misrael@townofancram.org.

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.



Joan Arnold announced the Angels award joined by the evening's emcee Lynne Perrella.