

The Croton-on-Hudson **Village Newsletter**

February 2004

Number 58

February

Calendar

- 4 Cons. Advisory Council
- 3 & 24 Planning Bd. Mtg.
- 11 Zoning Board
- 16 **Presidents' Day**
- 17 Village Board Mtg.
- 18 Water Control Comm.
- 18 Visual Environ. Bd.

Inside this issue:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------|
| Subscriber lists | 2 |
| Chemical Magic Plus | 2 |
| Employee Spotlight | 3 |
| Tax Components | 3 |
| Got a Question? | 4 |
| Defensive Driving | 4 |

Fire Dept. Service Award Referendum

After receiving support from the Village Board, a proposal to create a Service Award program for Croton's volunteer firemen and ambulance personnel will be subject to a mandatory referendum at the Village Election on March 16. The intent of the program is to provide active volunteers an opportunity to earn pension-like benefits at the "Entitlement Age" of 60. In order to qualify to receive this benefit volunteer firemen and ambulance personnel must earn a "Service Credit" for each calendar year of active service. The first year in which service credits can be earned is 2004.

For a Service Credit to be earned, an individual must accumulate 50 points under a point system in which points are given for responses to actual calls, training sessions, attendance at drills, etc.

Croton's proposed Service Award program, subject to the referendum in March, is a defined-benefit plan. Active volunteer firefighters, 18 or older, are eligible to become participants provided they accumulate the required points to earn a Service Credit. The monthly payment accrued shall be equal to \$20 for each year of Service Award Program Service Credits earned. The maximum monthly payment shall be \$400. The maximum would be reached by earning 20 Service Credits



for 20 years or more of active service. The Service Award Program, as authorized by the NYS Legislature in 1980, defines how the program is to be administered and includes the "point" system for earning Service Credits. There is a death and disability benefit that would apply

in cases where a participant is vested in the Program and dies before the entitlement age or before receiving 120 payments after the entitlement age. A permanent disability would also result in a benefit to a vested participant.

Under the law, the Village of Croton-on-Hudson will be the "sponsor", with the Trustees serving as the 'trustees' of the program's Trust Fund. The Village may retain a firm to assist them in administering the program.

It is currently anticipated that 121 volunteer firefighters and ambulance personnel would be eligible to start earning Service Credits. The estimated 2004 costs to the Village, payable in 2005, is approximately \$150,000, about \$1,250 per firefighter including an estimated \$3,500 administrative fee.

The Village and the Fire Dept. will schedule an informational meeting prior to the March 16 referendum date.

New Fire Chiefs Installed

On January 3, Mayor Robert Elliott installed the new chiefs of the Volunteer Fire Dept. to serve 2-year terms. William Vlad is Chief, Gary Diggs is 1st Ass't. Chief and Art Roosa, Jr. is 2nd Ass't Chief. Out-going Chief is Stephen Dominello.

Find Out What's Happening in Croton



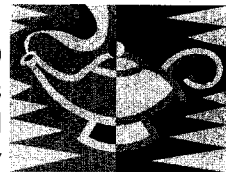
Are you interested in being automatically notified about upcoming meetings or special events in Croton? Perhaps you want to review the Minutes of a recent Board of Trustees meeting or view documents such as survey or study results, legal briefs, press releases, etc. as they become available? You can be notified automatically of these things by becoming an EMAIL Subscriber to the Village's website. Once you are a subscriber you will be notified by email of those things you wish to receive from Croton's 'virtual town hall'. This feature has been available for awhile but, so far, few people have subscribed. As it is an easy and reliable way for the Village to let residents know of special situations, opportunities and also emergencies, in addition to the information mentioned above, it is hoped that many more residents will subscribe. There is no cost to the subscriber. If you have internet access, here is how to do it.

1. Go to Croton's Home page at <http://www.crotononhudson-ny.gov>
2. In the lower right corner there is a shaded box saying "EMAIL Subscribe"; Click on this box.
3. You will be presented with the "EMAIL Subscriber page" with three boxes for you to fill in.
 - * The ACTION box—Choose either SUBSCRIBE (to be sent notices) or UNSUBSCRIBE (if you no longer want to receive notices).
 - * The MAIL LIST box—Select one of the three choices:
 - Public Notices (events, meetings, special notices about availability of documents or unusual situations)
 - Public Meeting Agendas—(provides you with agendas for Village Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board meetings.)
 - Board of Trustees Minutes—(provides you with approved minutes of Village Board meetings.)
 - * Your Email Address
4. You must subscribe to each of these three choices (MAIL LISTS) separately. Once you subscribe to one, you will see a screen telling you that your request has been received and that you will get an email response confirming it. If you then wish to sign up for another of the choices, click on the "EMAIL Subscribe" box in the lower right corner of this same screen and repeat the process.

Perhaps you wish to be able to send a comment to one of the Village Departments? Go to the Home page (see #1 above). From there, click on the shaded "Send Us Comments" box in the lower right corner of the Home page. To send your comments to any of 7 Departments about any subject, you will need to fill out the Contact information lines including your Name, (Address and Phone are optional) and your Email address. Every attempt will be made to respond to comments.

"Chemical Magic Plus"

The Recreation Dept. is offering a special program on Tuesday, February 17th from 9 am—3:30 pm for students in Grades 1 through 5. "Chemical Magic Plus" will teach chemistry concepts Harry Potter style. Each child will see amazing wizard-like demonstrations, learn concepts, and make to take home Flubber, a "Mushroom Monster", Silly Putty, Gum, a Sharpie shirt, Play Dough, Bubbling Lava Blobs, glowing slime, bouncy balls, and more. Everyone will take home a chemical recipe booklet and a mini chemistry kit as part of the program. Sign up by the deadline of February 10. The fee is \$50. for residents/\$60 for non-residents. Participants must supply a white t-shirt for the program and bring their own lunch.



Reminder!

The Village Offices will be closed on Monday, February 16 for Presidents' Day.

Spotlight on Janice Fuentes

If you have ever needed a building permit or a zoning variance, you probably know Janice Fuentes. For the past 10 years, Janice has been the Secretary for the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) as well as Secretary to the Water Control Commission, the Tax Grievance Committee, the Village Engineer and the Building Inspector/Assessor/Code Enforcement Officer.

As one of four people working in the Village Engineer's office, Janice handles inquiries from residents both in person and by phone. In addition to answering these questions, she issues building permits and Certificates

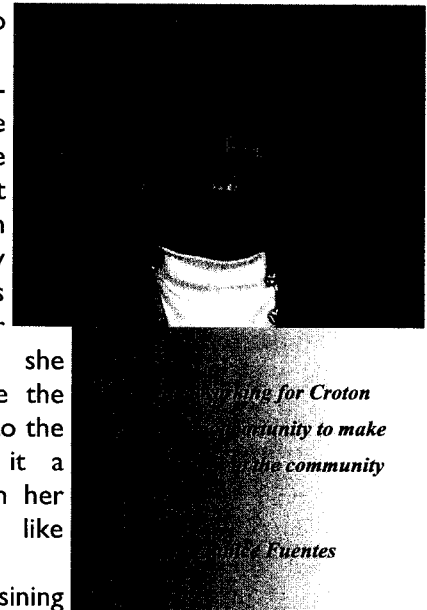
of Occupancy after approval by the Village Engineer, and applications for zoning variances and wetlands permits. The legal noticing for these applications as well as any correspondence related to the applications is also handled by Janice. Performing property searches for potential buyers and at the homeowner's request is another task that she performs on a regular basis.

One aspect of her job that Janice particularly likes is her involvement with the ZBA issues. She handles applications from their beginning, with the applicant's request, to their end, with the ZBA deliberations and decision. She finds a great deal of satisfaction in seeing

applications through to completion.

Janice feels that working in a village that she loves very much is one of the nice things about her job. Everybody in the office "wears many hats" and they work as a team under Engineer Dan O'Connor who, she says, has helped make the office very responsive to the residents. She finds it a pleasure to work with her co-workers; they are like family.

Janice was raised in Ossining but for the last 30 years has lived in Croton where her 2 children and 5 grandchildren still live. Both her children and grandchildren attended Croton schools.



Residential Property Tax Components

Many residents do not know that their residential property taxes are comprised of four (4) components which are paid to different entities. Village Treasurer Robert Reardon prepared the following explanation of how your property tax liability is divided:



1. Village of Croton tax—due each June 1st, payable by June 30th to the Village of Croton-on-Hudson. It is mailed out at the end of May and covers the period of June to May—Croton's fiscal year.
2. Town of Cortlandt tax—due each April 1st, payable by April 30th to the Town of Cortlandt Tax Receiver. It is mailed out the end of March and covers the period of April to March.
3. Westchester County tax—due each April 1, payable by April 30th to the Town of Cortlandt Tax Receiver. Note: Items 2 and 3 above are combined on the same bill as the Town collects the County taxes.
4. School tax—payable in two installments to the Town of Cortlandt Tax Receiver. It is mailed

out at the end of August with the first half due Sept. 1st, payable by September 30th, covering the period from September to December. No reminder is mailed for the second half payment which is due January 1 and payable by January 31st, covering the period of January through August. The S.T.A.R.

exemption is applicable to the school tax and is available through the Town of Cortlandt Assessor's Office.

If the last day of any collection period falls on a weekend or holiday, the grace period is extended to the next regular business day. Post marks are valid if done at the United States Post Office.

The Town of Cortlandt Offices are located at 1 Heady Street, Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567. The Clerk's Office is 734-1020 and the Tax Office is 734-1030.

We're on the Web. Visit us
at:
<http://www.crotononhudson-ny.gov>

Got a Question?



Last year a tree in front of my house died. I understand the Village provides 'street trees' when requested. If so, how can I ask for one?



You are right. Street trees are replaced and can be requested by calling 271-3775. The DPW compiles a list of the requests, inspects the locations and determines the type of tree that would be appropriate in each location. For several years, the DPW has been planting a variety of trees, trying not to plant the same species of trees next to one another. The Village's Conservation Advisory Council is working on making suggestions for the plantings.

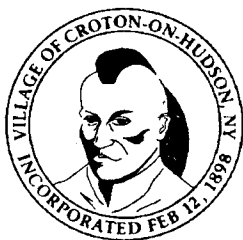
The DPW does not plant trees that will grow to 40 feet under existing the utility wires. In

these situations, the DPW plants smaller trees. They also try not to overload the front of any one property with too many trees so requests for additional street trees where some exist may be denied.

Defensive Driving Course

A six hour course for licensed drivers is offered by the Recreation Dept. on two Wednesdays, March 3rd and 10th, from 6 PM to 9 PM in the Municipal Building Community Room. The fee is \$35 for residents/\$45 for non-residents. Registration is due by February 27. Upon completion of the course, 4 points are automatically reduced from the driving record point total. Plus, if the participant is listed as the principal operator on an auto insurance policy, a 10% discount on collision and liability will be applied for a three years when the broker is given the course completion certificate. Both evenings must be attended in order to receive a certificate. Class size is limited so early registration is encouraged.

February 2004



Published for the Residents of the Village of Croton-on-Hudson

Robert W. Elliott, Mayor
Georgianna K. Grant, Trustee
Deborah Y. McCarthy, Trustee
Gregory J. Schmidt, Trustee
Leo A. W. Wiegman, Trustee

Richard F. Herbek, Village Manager
Stanley H. Kellerhouse Municipal Building
One Van Wyck Street
(914) 271-4781-2

Bulk Rate
Permit No. 111
Carrier Route
Pre-Sort
Yorktown Heights
New York 10598

Postal Patron

Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520