

Turtle Bay News

A Publication of the Turtle Bay Association

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Upgrades Planned for Neighborhood Parks



Nearly 500 neighborhood youngsters flocked to MacArthur Playground recently to see the Swedish Marionette Theatre perform "The Princess, the Emperor and the Dove." The puppet show was presented by the New York City Parks Foundation and sponsored by the TBA. MacArthur Playground is one of Turtle Bay's three public parks supported by local community groups with the help of loyal volunteers.

Turtle Bay's three small public parks – Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, Peter Detmold Park and MacArthur Playground – are scheduled for some important upgrades, thanks largely to the support of local community groups. From painting, to WiFi installation, to new signage, Turtle Bay's neighborhood parks are keeping up with the City's biggest and best.

At Peter Detmold Park, the narrow stretch of parkland along the East River from 49th Street to just south of 52nd Street, the entranceway trellis and central pergola will be repaired and repainted, says TBA Parks Committee Chair Marie-Louise Handal. And new signage is being designed, including plaques honoring the memory of Peter Detmold and James Amster, leading community activists in the 1950s and 1960s. In addition, Marie-Louise hopes signs pointing to the little park can be installed on First Avenue because, she says, "Too many neighbors either aren't aware that this pretty park exists, or don't realize how many recent improvements have been made there."

Detmold Park is entered at 49th Street near the East River, or at 51st Street and Beekman Place, near the park's unique dog run, an area north of 51st Street where dogs are allowed to play off-leash. The dog run is separated from the rest of the park by an iron fence,

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Plaza's Café Concession Awaits Final Decision

As the Turtle Bay News went to press in early August, the café concession that operates from the small glass house at the east end of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza remained closed, the result of a dispute over the process used by the City Parks Department in awarding a new eight-year license to operate at the site.

The City Comptroller's office has refused to register the new license until the Parks Department clarifies its process, and the Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, the non-profit group that supports and maintains the Plaza, has filed a lawsuit charging that the Parks Department acted in an "arbitrary and capricious" manner by failing to adhere to its own rules in making the award.

The stand-off began last spring when the

Parks Department rejected a bid by the Patio Café to continue operating at the site after its license expired on June 30. Instead, it awarded the new contract to one of three other bidders, the New York Milkshake Company, a small operator that recently closed its East Village location. The Patio, owned by the Hospitality Holdings group, had operated at Dag Plaza for the past three years.

The Friends of Dag Plaza immediately questioned how the bidding process had been handled, saying it believed the Parks Department had selected the least qualified of the four bidders.

"The facts simply don't support the Parks Department decision," says Friends President Sherrill Kazan. "Our concern is that the Milkshake Company cannot deliver on its

unrealistic projections and that a failed café would be detrimental to the Plaza."

Community Board 6 also questioned the bidding process. And local elected officials – including Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Assemblyman Jonathan Bing and City Councilman Dan Garodnick – wrote to Mayor Bloomberg and City Comptroller William Thompson to ask for a review of the bids. Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer also wrote to Comptroller Thompson.

In late June, after meetings and numerous communications with the Parks Department proved fruitless, Friends and the Patio Café filed a lawsuit against the Parks Department, charging that the bid selection process was tainted and the award should be annulled.

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Update on Development News

ADL Building

With the planned demolition of the Anti-Defamation League building at 46th Street and First Avenue to make way for a new condominium building, neighbors have questioned what will become of the “Wall of Remembrance” on the building’s north side facing Dag Hammarskjold Plaza. The ADL, which sold the building to Macklowe Properties last year, says that under the sales agreement, ADL will dismantle the Wall and reinstall it at another visible and appropriate location. “We are currently studying a number of different locales,” says an ADL spokesperson.

The Wall consists of seven bronze bas-relief scenes created by artist Arbit Blatas to commemorate the suffering of European Jews during the Holocaust. It was formally dedicated on April 25, 1982.

Meanwhile, ADL headquarters staff moved out of the building to new Midtown offices in mid-July, and the last remaining tenant in the building will vacate at year-end. Demolition is scheduled to begin sometime thereafter, Macklowe says. There are continuing reports that Macklowe has selected Renzo Piano, architect of the recently opened Morgan Library addition, to design the new condo building.

U.N. Renovation

A strategy for renovating the outdated U.N. buildings has been approved by the U.N. General Assembly, removing a big obstacle that has held up the project for the past several years. The plan calls for the 39-story Secretariat building to be renovated in four phases, with a temporary two-story structure built on the U.N.’s North Lawn to house offices and function rooms for displaced staff.

Financial details are to be worked out in the Assembly’s fall session, and work could then begin as early as next year, with a target completion date of 2014.

Con Ed Waterside Site

In an apparent effort to convince the community that ongoing criticism of the Con Edison Waterside redevelopment project is being considered, the architects for developer Sheldon Solow presented a modified plan in late June. The project’s seven towers are now some 12-15 percent lower, achieved by reducing the floor-to-ceiling height, but keeping the originally planned 5.5 million square feet of floor area. That still creates monoliths 50 percent higher than the U.N. Secretariat.

Solow’s request for 100 percent commercial zoning of the nine-acre site remains, and the office tower has been increased from 50 percent to 100 percent business use. There are two handicapped accessible entrances added and an ice-skating rink has been replaced by a shallow reflective pool. Other than that, there have been few changes to meet the demands of the community to revise the project: 39th and 40th Streets remain as private driveways rather than being opened up to the public, the so-called three-acre park remains designed as an enclave for those living within Waterside, and there is no waterfront access and no coordination with expected FDR Drive reconstruction, or, should it be built, a U.N. building in Moses Park.

Albano Building

The owners of the Albano Building, 311 East 46th Street, will not confirm neighborhood reports that there are plans to convert the 1920s 17-story office tower to condominiums. A spokesman for the owner, Extell Development, would say only that Extell is considering “various options for the building.” He confirmed that Extell also owns the three five-story buildings directly east of the Albano Building, but would not comment on plans for those buildings either.

There is currently only one tenant remaining in the Albano Building, and the three buildings next door are vacant.

Mark Your Calendar

- **Saturday, Sept. 2**
Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza
Street Fair
Second Avenue, 45th-57th Streets
212-751-5465
- **Saturday, Oct. 7**
Octoberfest and
Children’s Jamboree
Noon - 5 p.m.
Dag Hammarskjold Plaza
212-751-5465
- **Tuesday, Nov. 14**
TBA Annual Meeting
Details will be mailed to members
212-751-5465
- **Last Tuesday every month**
17th Precinct Community Council
Open Meeting, 6 p.m.
Sutton Place Synagogue
225 East 51st Street
212-826-3228
(No meetings July, Aug., Dec.)
- **Second Wednesday every month**
Community Board 6
Full Board Meeting, 7 p.m.
NYU Medical Center
550 First Avenue
212-319-3750

TBA Contacts:

Phone: 212-751-5465

Fax: 212-751-4941

E-mail: tbaoffice@mindspring.com

Web Site: www.turtlebay-nyc.org

Check our Bulletin Board:
East side of Second Avenue,
between 48th and 49th Streets,
on outside wall of the supermarket.

Turtle Bay Association

President: William E. Curtis

Vice Presidents: Millie Margiotta,

Dolores Marsh, Bruce Silberblatt

Treasurer: Francine Irwin

Secretary: Barbara Connolly

Directors: Jed Abrams,

Ethel Bendove, Bunny Blei,

Meryl Brodsky, Barbara Connolly,

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Marie-Louise Handal, Pamela Hanlon,

Olga Hoffmann, Bill Huxley, Richard Irwin,

Millie Margiotta, Dolores Marsh,

Patricia Q. McDougald, Francine Irwin,

Michael Resnick, Carol Rinzler,

Jeannie Sakol, Helen Shapiro,

Bruce Silberblatt

Better Regulation Of Newsracks Urged

Neighborhood groups fed up with the proliferation of poorly maintained, awkwardly and dangerously placed newsracks are taking action. The Turtle Bay Association has joined with other community groups calling for stricter regulation of newsracks by the city.

Newsracks are self-service or coin-operated containers used to display and distribute newspapers and other written materials to the public. In 2003, the City Council passed tough new regulations regarding newsracks. But now there are complaints that these regulations have been loosened to the point of rendering the newsrack law virtually non-existent.

A coalition calling itself the New York City Newsrack Committee is calling on the City Council to enact tougher laws. Ethel Bendove, TBA Environmental Committee chairwoman, says TBA members can help by writing to their City Council members or the chairman of the City Council Transportation Committee, John C. Liu, 250 Broadway, 18th floor, New York, NY 10007. Ethel says writers should express their concern and urge legislation to strengthen regulation.

Newsorthy Notes

New Tree-bed Enclosures. Some 20 handsome black steel fence enclosures have been installed around the few remaining bare tree beds in the neighborhood. The enclosures are thanks to a generous grant to the Turtle Bay Tree Fund from the office of former City Councilwoman Eva Moskowitz, who made the grant previous to leaving office. Bill Huxley, President of the Tree Fund, says that with the new decorative fences, almost all of the Turtle Bay tree beds are now enclosed in some manner.

Mobile MetroCard. A MetroCard van, a full-service convenience vehicle for buying or refilling MetroCards, makes a stop in Turtle Bay the first and third Thursday of every month, at Second Avenue and 47th Street, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. For more information, call 718-243-4999 or visit www.mta.info/metrocard.

Greenmarket Advice. Sean Tanner, new manager of the Greenmarket at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, encourages neighbors to visit *all* of the many vendors in the market. "I've noticed some people walk past on the Second Avenue side and visit only the first or second stalls," he says, "And yet we have great fish, turkey, cheese, bakeries and flower ven-

dors farther east along 47th Street." The Greenmarket is open each Wednesday year-round.

Seriously Small. Manhattan Espresso Café, 146 East 49th Street, may be small (only 400 square feet), but that doesn't mean it isn't serious. When opening almost 15 years ago, owner Brad Bonnewell traveled throughout Italy to research espresso machines and find the best coffees. The café was one of the first New York establishments to use the famous Illy espresso. A long-time TBA business member, Manhattan Espresso serves pastries in the morning; French crepes, soups and sandwiches for lunch; sweets in the afternoon; and, of course, many varieties of house-roasted coffee all day long. It also sells whole-bean coffee by the pound. Open weekdays, 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

E-mail Reminders. If you are not currently receiving e-mail reminders about TBA and other community events, please e-mail the TBA office (tbaoffice@mindspring.com) with your correct e-mail address.

With Sadness. It is with sadness that we report the recent death of Eileen Joy, a TBA member and loyal volunteer for many years. Our hearts go out to her loved ones.

Positive Signs on 'Noise Front'

For the first time since 1976, a New York City resident has been appointed to the three-member State Liquor Authority (S.L.A.), which is responsible for granting liquor licenses statewide. The appointment is considered important because City neighborhoods have long been concerned that upstate commissioners don't have a full appreciation of the issues surrounding the City's crowded bar scene. (See Spring 2006 Turtle Bay News)

Turtle Bay's State Senator Liz Krueger and Assemblyman Jonathan Bing had been among those urging Governor Pataki to name a commissioner from the City. The appointee, Noreen Healy of Brooklyn Heights, previously was a court attorney in New York State Supreme Court in Kings and Bronx counties.

Meanwhile, in another development related to neighborhood bars, a temporary restraining order stopping the S.L.A. from issuing a license to the Embassy disco bar, which plans to open at Second Avenue and 46th Street, remains in effect as of early August. A judge is expected to rule on a court proceeding filed by neighbors concerned about excessive noise from the bar, within the next couple months. The TBA has filed a statement of support in the proceeding.



During the Turtle Bay Street Fair, TBA's Millie Margiotta shows off an "I ♥ Turtle Bay" T-shirt, being used as a TBA membership promotion. To the right of Millie are Fran Walsh, Colleen Curtis, Pat McDougald and Rob Lindquist. To receive a free T-shirt, call the TBA office with a new member's name, and a T-shirt will be sent to you as soon as the membership coupon and dues are received.

TBA Board at Work

The following is a summary of issues and activities addressed at recent TBA Board meetings, as reflected in the meeting minutes. The TBA:

- is monitoring, with Community Board 6 and as part of the East Midtown Coalition for Sensible Development, plans for the Con Ed Waterside development and United Nations renovation project.
- has joined other neighborhood interests in opposing MTA's planned utility building on East 50th Street, which has now been modified.
- is monitoring neighborhood construction sites for safety and other concerns.
- supports community parks, including the planned refurbishment of Peter Detmold Park, and support for Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza in its objections to the Plaza's café concession award.
- has joined with other groups to demand stronger laws regarding newsrack placement on City sidewalks.
- continues to work to beautify the neighborhood through the TBA Tree Program and support of the Turtle Bay Tree Fund.
- has sponsored or supported recent events, including the Turtle Bay Street Fair, Katharine Hepburn Garden Party, children's puppet performance in MacArthur Playground and art show at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza. Upcoming events include Octoberfest.
- produced a pocket guide and walking tour of Turtle Bay historical and architectural sites.

Plaza's Café *continued from page 1*

The suit says a review of the proposals shows that the winning bidder lacks experience and financial capability compared with the other three bidders, and that its fee offer – substantially more than any of the other more experienced bidders, whose fee offers were all similar – is based on sales projections that are vague and unrealistic. By awarding the license based solely on its fee offer, the Parks Department violated its own rules and guidelines laid out in its RFP (Request for Proposal), according to the suit.

Sherrill Kazan says that on first learning of the award last spring, Friends met with the Parks Department, in a meeting arranged by Assemblyman Bing. In that meeting and other communications, she says, "Parks' lack of response was deeply disappointing.

Tradition Reigns at Garden Party

Birthday cake is a tradition at the Katharine Hepburn Garden Party, held each year on the anniversary of Ms. Hepburn's birthday in May. This year marked the biggest turnout ever to enjoy the fun, music and...cake. The party is held at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza's Katharine Hepburn Garden, named for Ms. Hepburn who lived in Turtle Bay for more than 60 years.



Joining the party were (bottom row, left to right) Assemblyman Jonathan Bing, Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza President Sherrill Kazan, TBA President Bill Curtis, and City Councilman Dan Garodnick. Norman Curtis and Blossom Benedict entertained the group.

We consider ourselves to be a partner with the Department in making the Plaza the vibrant public park that it is. And yet, we feel the Department turned a blind eye to our concerns."

She points out that once before, the Plaza's café was left vacant by a weak concessionaire who – in 2003 before the Patio began operating there – failed, leaving the Plaza without a café for several months. Friends says it wants to ensure that won't happen again.

Friends has the strong support of the TBA, and some 1,300 local residents have signed

a petition in support of the current concessionaire, the Patio.

Meanwhile, State Supreme Court Justice Lewis Stone is expected to rule shortly on the legal proceeding brought by the Friends group.

Turtle Bay News

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Good Neighbors = Good Business

For many years now, Turtle Bay merchants have shown themselves to be good neighbors by contributing valuable prizes to the Annual TBA raffle held each year in conjunction with the Turtle Bay Street Fair. This year was no exception, with some 19 businesses – including restaurants, specialty shops, a bank and skin care salon – contributing prizes for the raffle, held Sunday afternoon, May 7, during the Street Fair festivities.

“The TBA is ever-grateful for the generosity of our local merchants, who help make our raffle such a success year after year,” says Francine Irwin, who chairs the Street Fair’s Raffle Committee and works alongside Street Fair Chairwoman Barbara Connolly in coordinating the two events.

Proceeds of the raffle are used to support worthy Turtle Bay causes.

In addition, the proceeds of the Street Fair itself, this year totaling \$10,000, are given back to the local community through grants and donations. TBA Grants Committee Chairwoman Pat McDougald says her committee is currently reviewing potential recipients of this year’s proceeds, which will be dispersed within the next several months. Last year, the grants were given to the Turtle Bay Tree Fund, Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, Doe Fund, Vanderbilt YMCA and Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza.

Below is a complete list of merchants whose generosity helped make this year’s Turtle Bay Street Fair raffle such a success. Many of them also participate, along with more than 100 other local businesses, in the TBA discount program, which offers savings to TBA members throughout the year. Check the TBA Discount Directory, mailed annually to TBA members, for details.

Affinia Fifty Hotel

Two nights weekend stay in one of the hotel's suites

Blair Perrone Steakhouse

\$100 gift certificate for lunch or dinner

Beekman Liquors

\$50 gift certificate

Buttercup Bake Shop

Two dozen cupcakes

Black Finn Bar & Restaurant*

Four \$25 gift certificates

Country Bank*

\$100 savings bond

Come Again Romantic Boutique*

\$50 gift certificate

DeGrazia Italian Restaurant*

\$100 gift certificate

Lia Schorr Skin Care

Two prizes: massage & manicure; facial & pedicure

Phyllis Lucas Gallery

Old New York print: “Wall Street in 1856”

Nanni’s Restaurant

\$50 gift certificate

Palm Restaurant

Dinner for two

Pescatore Restaurant*

\$80 gift certificate

San Martin Restaurant*

\$100 gift certificate

Smith & Wollensky Restaurant

\$100 gift certificate

Smorgas Chef Restaurant*

\$100 gift certificate for dinner; \$50 for lunch; \$50 for brunch.

Vanderbilt YMCA*

One-year membership, a \$1,033 value.

In addition, **CBS-AM** radio provided two New York City Ballet tickets and two theatre tickets, and **WINS** radio, two theatre tickets.

*Merchant participates in the TBA Discount Program.

Briefly in Business:

- **Ribot Restaurant**, 780 Third Avenue at 48th Street, is a new TBA business member. An Italian restaurant named after the famous 20th century race horse, Ribot has an outdoor seating area as well as sleek indoor venue.
- **G.P. Florist**, which opened its doors at 903 Second Avenue more than 30 years ago, has closed the shop and joined **Big Apple Florist**, 228 East 45th Street.
- The long-time Turtle Bay restaurant **La Maganette** has closed and **Dos Cominos** – a Mexican restaurant owned by the same group that runs 16

other New York restaurants, including Blue Water Grill and Ruby Foo’s – will open on the site at Third Avenue and 50th Street in the fall.

- **Salon Amici** recently opened at 255 East 50th Street and is a new TBA business member. Owned by Turtle Bay neighbor Denise Wnuk, the salon offers a full range of hair care and styling services. Open seven days a week. Call 212-486-3623 for appointments.
- **Beverly Hoffman, Certified Social Worker**, is a new TBA business member. Located at 333 East 49th Street, Lobby A, Ms. Hoffman’s phone number is 212-751-8020.



Neighbor Ron Sussman was one of the happy winners at this year’s Turtle Bay Street Fair raffle. His prize: two tickets to “Light in the Piazza.”

Grand Tour. A 90-minute walking tour of the Grand Central/Midtown neighborhood with historian Justin Ferate departs from the corner of 42nd Street and Park Avenue (Sculpture Court of the Whitney Museum at Altria) each Friday at 12:30 p.m. The tour is free; no reservations needed. Sponsored by the Grand Central Partnership. 212-883-2420; www.grandcentralpartnership.org.

Instituto Cervantes. Exhibit of photos and articles by correspondents reporting the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939. Through Sept. 30. Free. Gallery hours: Tues.-Fri. 12:30-6:30 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. 211-215 East 49th Street. 212-308-7720; www.cervantes.org.

Park Upgrades *continued from page 1* so “dog-shy” visitors are not disturbed. The park is known for its vegetation, including heavy wisteria vines and rose bushes, which Marie-Louise says are being cared for this summer by an invigorated group of volunteers. The repairs and signage, and some new plantings, are being funded by the TBA with the support of the Friends of Detmold Park.

At Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, with its Katharine Hepburn Garden, there are plans for free wireless internet access (WiFi), allowing park visitors with computers configured for wireless networking to check e-mail and browse the internet at any location in the Plaza. The arrangement, one of the first that will be implemented in the city’s parks, is a

‘Kamishibai for Kids.’ Pre-Halloween event for ages 5-12 and accompanying adults at Japan Society. Folktales of Japanese mystical creatures, with song and dance. After performance, attendees will create masks of folktale characters. Sun., Oct. 29, 2-4 p.m. \$10 per family (up to five people). Call ahead for tickets, 212-715-1258. 333 East 47th Street. www.japansociety.org.

Turtle Bay Music School. Voice Recital, Sat., Oct. 14, 6:45 p.m. Em Lee Concert Hall, 244 East 52nd Street. Free. No reservations needed. 212-753-8811; www.tbms.org.

- compiled by Rita Rowan

project of the Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza and NYC Wireless, a non-profit group that will do the technical work.

Sadly, the café concession at the east end of Dag Plaza, which operates under a Parks Department license, has been closed most of the summer pending a dispute over the contract award. (See story, page 1)

At MacArthur Playground, trees and shrubs planted by the city two years ago are taking hold, providing a backdrop to the building next door and eliminating what had been a rodent problem in years past. And this summer, as it has in the past, the TBA arranged for replenishing sand in the sandbox.

In addition to the neighborhood’s three public parks, there are numerous privately owned pocket parks in Turtle Bay that are

‘Good News, Bad News’

The good news is that the U.N. Gardens reopened to the public late last year after being closed for most of the past five years. The unfortunate news is that, due to a communications mix-up, not all of the U.N.’s security officers got the message. And so when some of our TBA members, on the recommendation of the Turtle Bay News, showed up at the U.N. visitors’ entrance to tour the Gardens, they were advised that the Garden was closed.

“We are extremely sorry for the confusion,” says U.N. Security and Safety Services Inspector Clarence Pugh, “We obviously didn’t communicate with our staff as well as the Turtle Bay News communicated with its neighbors.” Inspector Pugh says he is now confident the problem has been straightened out. But just to be sure, he has ordered signage for the visitor’s entrance that will have information regarding the park’s open hours.

For the record, the park is open seven days a week, from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with last entry at 3 p.m.

open to the public, including an especially pretty one at the northwest corner of Second Avenue and 46th Street that was recently reopened after extensive repairs and upgrades by its owner, Dag Hammarskjold Towers. The U.N. Park, of course, also provides greenery for the neighborhood.



Turtle Bay neighbor Arica Himmel follows along as “Dylan” heads for the dog run at Peter Detmold Park, where he can play off leash. The dog run is separated from the rest of the park by an iron fence so “dog-shy” visitors are not disturbed.

Yes, I want to join the Turtle Bay Association and help support our community’s quality of life.



Annual Membership Dues

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business \$40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Pacesetter \$250 |

Name _____

Address _____ Apt _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

E-mail _____

I would like to become more involved in TBA activities.

Please make your check payable to Turtle Bay Association.

Mail to: Turtle Bay Association, 224 E. 47th St., New York, NY 10017