

# Turtle Bay News

A Publication of the Turtle Bay Association

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## Turtle Bay Association, at 60 Years Old, Will Celebrate Its Achievements

Some 60 years ago this fall, a small group of East 49th Street residents got together at Amster Yard, located between Second and Third avenues, to strategize on how they could scuttle



Two clapboard houses at 312-314 East 53rd Street, built in 1866. Both are designated landmarks.

a city plan they deemed harmful to the neighborhood. They gave themselves a name – the East 49th Street Association – and after some long, thoughtful strategy sessions, they went on to win their battle: The city halted its plan to broaden 49th Street to make way for more automobile traffic, which would have meant narrowing the sidewalks and uprooting well-established shade trees in the process.

Their success encouraged the group to take on other fights to preserve the neighborliness of the East Midtown area, and before long, residents from blocks north and south of 49th Street had joined the cause. Soon, the designation of “49th Street” no longer seemed appropri-

ate, and the group changed its name to the Turtle Bay Association.

This fall, as the organization marks its 60th anniversary,

it can look back with pride at some hard-fought struggles to maintain the area’s residential appeal, a major challenge for a neighborhood located between the United Nations’ six-block complex on one side and the office tow-



Dag Hammarskjold Plaza today, looking east.

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## Turtle Bay’s Supermarket Loss Reflects City-wide Trend

In the fall of 2015, when the Food Emporium in Turtle Bay closed, residents were unhappy to hear that a CVS store would replace it. Left with only two full-service supermarkets located far afield within the area, the addition of another large-chain pharmacy to the several already nearby was unwelcome news.

In the event, CVS has yet to arrive and the space remains empty, its capacious windows covered with brown paper. A source at 251 East 51st Street, the building which leases the store, informed the TBA that CVS still intends to move in, but has been hampered in its plans to reconfigure the space by the contract inherited from the previous tenant.

Traditional supermarkets are becoming scarcer in New York City. Replac-

ing them are specialty fresh and prepared food stores (Whole Foods, Trader Joe’s) that carry few, if any, household items, and chain pharmacies (Walgreens-Duane Reade, CVS) that offer household and limited food goods, but no fresh foods: meat, fish, produce, dairy and bread.

The trend is widespread and unwelcome to many, especially senior citizens, people with disabilities and those who live in poorer neighborhoods. Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer recently published a report, “Manhattan Supermarkets: How to Keep Them Alive,” that reviews three cases in the city (including Turtle Bay’s Food Emporium), details the supermarket landscape in Manhattan, examines the impact of store closings on

*continued on page 6*

## Event Calendar

### National Night Out Against Crime

Tuesday, August 1, 5-8:30 pm

Dag Hammarskjold Plaza  
Second Avenue at 47th Street

Live music. Free food. Elected officials. City Department information displays.

Sponsored by the 17th Precinct  
Community Council

### Save the Date

### TBA 60th Anniversary Celebration

Thursday Sept 7, 6-9 pm

Join us for cocktails.

Japan Society  
333 East 47th Street  
Invitation to come



## New Book Tells of City-UN Partnership

A new book, scheduled to be in bookstores later this summer, chronicles the often rocky relationship between New York City and the UN. "A Worldly Affair: New York, the United Nations, and the Story Behind Their Unlikely Bond," written by Pamela Hanlon and published by Fordham University Press, is the history of the more than seventy-year partnership that some have likened to a long marriage: There have been quarrels at times, even threats to leave one another, but through all the years, the two have stuck together.

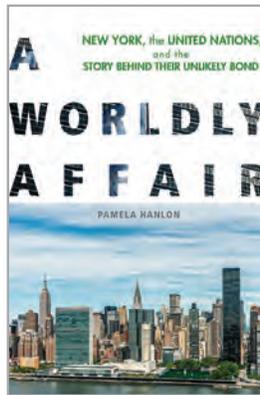
The book opens in 1945, when Mayor Fiorello La Guardia was doggedly determined to bring the new world body to New York, and it moves through the often tense, troubling decades that follow. In the UN's early days in the city, the organization faced racial prejudice and anti-communist passions, and city residents grew impatient with spies, scofflaw diplomats, provocative foreign visitors and controversial UN-member policy positions. Later, as the UN grew from 51 member states to 193 today, New Yorkers often resented building encroachment on their neighborhood, a

concern felt most deeply by residents in the Turtle Bay community.

Yet, as the city-UN bond now moves into its eighth decade – with the UN headquarters complex having been freshly renovated for the future and the city proudly proclaiming the organization adds nearly \$4 billion to the New York economy each year – it is clear the decades-long marriage will last.

"A Worldly Affair" (Fordham University Press/Empire State Editions; 224 pages plus 35-photo insert; \$29.95) is currently available on Amazon.com, and will be in bookstores as of September 5.

Hanlon is also author of "Manhattan's Turtle Bay: Story of a Midtown Neighborhood" (Arcadia Publishing, 2008).



## News from Community Board 6

### CB6 Has a New Address

The CB6 office is now located at 235 East 20th Street. Mailing address is: Community Board Six Manhattan, PO Box 1672, New York, NY 10159-1672. Telephone: 212-319-3756. Fax: 212-319-3772. Email: [office@cbsix.org](mailto:office@cbsix.org).

### Resource Guide to Landmarks Now Available

CB6 has released its first resource guide for designated landmarks within the district. The Guide was produced in the face of proliferating development that might threaten some of these sites and others not yet formally designated as landmarks. The aim is to inform CB6 residents about these historic treasures, so they can learn about, enjoy and participate in protecting them.

### Health Care: Free Home HIV Test Available

Eligible participants can receive a free home HIV test from either the NYC De-

partment of Health and Mental Hygiene or the NYS Department of Health.

### New Pedestrian Safety Measures Installed

Following a fatal pedestrian accident at 58th Street and Second Avenue in early July, CB6 called on the Department of Transportation, resulting in the installation of a leading pedestrian interval signal at the intersection.

Community activism made this possible. CB6 invites residents to report the most dangerous intersections near their homes. If you know of a dangerous intersection, please fill out a survey at [cbsix.org](http://cbsix.org).

#### Editorial Committee

**Editor:** Lee Frankel

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## TBA Who's Who

### Turtle Bay Association

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

### Board of Directors

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Barbara Connolly

## Community Calendar

### 17th Precinct Community Council

Open Meeting

Last Tuesday every month, 6 pm

Sutton Place Synagogue

225 East 51st Street

212-826-3228

(No meetings July, August, December)

### Community Board 6

Full Board Meeting

Second Wednesday every month,

7 pm

NYU Medical Center

550 First Avenue

212-319-3750

Now live online at

<http://wp.cbsix.org/live>

## A Successful 2017 Katharine Hepburn Garden Party

This year's party, in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, was the 20th one celebrating Katharine Hepburn's birthday. It was as enjoyable as ever.

The day began with a live performance of favorites from The Great American Songbook by cabaret and Broadway singer

Hannah Harding,

Party-goers had a tour of the Katharine Hepburn Garden led by Anne Saxon-Hersh, Director of Development for Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza. Anne recently oversaw the rejuvenation of the garden, which added hundreds of new

plants to the existing resplendent greenery. Hepburn lived in Turtle Bay for many years. She was a devoted gardener, and the garden in DHP is named for her.

The event was co-sponsored by Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza and the Turtle Bay Association.



# The Greenmarket: Country Comes to Midtown

By HANITA BLUMFIELD

Visit Dag Hammarskjold Plaza on a Wednesday, and you'll find it transformed by the greenmarket and permeated with the sights and scents of the country: fresh vegetables, fruits and flowers, herbs, spices, and freshly baked breads, muffins and cakes.



Farmers offer produce fresh from the land and greet city neighbors who arrive throughout

the day to browse and buy fresh country goods. A parade of people goes by: parents with children, workers on their lunch breaks, seniors with caregivers, and dogs hoping for tidbits. The greenmarket puts people in a good mood.



I began my visit with Dolma, a farmer with Samascott Orchards in Kinderhook, New York,

He's been at the market for 15 years, and his enthusiasm has not waned. He spoke avidly about the 70 varieties of apples he grows and the farm's baked goods, including beautiful carrot cakes, apple and other fruit pies and, my favorite, pumpkin bread. A frequent customer and young mother, Noelle, who stopped by with her two young children, noted that the prices are half that of store-bought products.

Continuing on, I visited with S & S.O. Produce Farms, from Goshen, New York. The original farm owner was a "founding father" of the greenmarket movement 45 years ago, and S & S.O. has been at the



DHP greenmarket for 20 years. Their Yukon gold potatoes, heirloom tomatoes and lettuces looked so fresh that I imagined them jumping off the dinner plate.

Many customers, such as Will, an entrepreneur, are regular Wednesday shoppers. They laud the quality and variety of items on sale, and the friendly

vendors reminiscent of simpler times when merchants and customers knew each other. One man, a passionate cook, said that when he was short of cash one day, a vendor said, "That's okay. Pay me next week." The greenmarket turns a city neighborhood into a community.

Lani's Farm, from Bordentown, New Jersey, specializes in "mixed Asian produce." Stand-worker Nerman touted the virtues of avocado squash, dragon tongue beans and squash blossoms, among other unusual items. And I could not resist buying Lisianthus flowers whose deep purple color was exquisite. The flowers were popular with shoppers.

Mauro and Richard, from Francesca's Bakery in Pequannock, New Jersey, presided over a display of baked goods: chocolate babka and pumpnickel raisin bread (not for the calorie-conscious, but worth the indulgence). If you're looking for raw milk,



cheese and pasteurized eggs, go no farther than Millport Dairy, located in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. They also sell Chocolate Whoopie pie, Shoofly pie, and other goodies. The plaza merchants also bring a variety of fresh sea food, including tuna steaks, with the major vendor being Pura Vida Fisheries from Suffolk County.

## GrowNYC Recycling at Greenmarket

### Accepted Fabric Items

- Clean and dry clothing
- Paired shoes
- Linens
- Handbags
- Belts
- Other reusable textiles



**NO** fabric rolls or scraps of any size, rugs, carpeting, pillows, comforters or luggage.

Contributions are tax deductible.

### Food Scraps Accepted

- Fruits and vegetables
- Non-greasy scraps (rice, pasta, bread, cereal)
- Coffee grounds & filters
- Teabags
- Egg and nut shells
- Pits
- Cut or dried flowers
- Houseplants and potting soil.



**NO** meat, chicken, fish, greasy food scraps, fat, oil, dairy, animal waste, litter or bedding, coal or charcoal, coconuts, diseased & insect-infested houseplants or soil, or biodegradable or compostable plastics.

### How to Store Food Scraps

Collect in large yogurt or other covered containers, or paper bags, plastic bags, milk cartons or in commercial compost pails.

To reduce odors, store in the freezer or refrigerator. A layer of shredded newspaper at the bottom of the storage container also helps.

### Clothing & Food Scrap Collection Times

8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Every Wednesday at  
DHP Green Market

My rounds ended at Hot Bread Kitchen which bakes its breads right here in East Harlem. They specialize in multi-ethnic breads, such as honey and raisin challah, focaccia and M'smen, a Moroccan flatbread. They also sponsor a community-based job training program for women, many of whom come from West Africa.

Farm stands at the Greenmarket accept Cash, SNAP/EBT, Debit/Credit, WIC and Senior FMNP coupons. Health Bucks are available year-round. Electronic Benefit Transfer users receive a \$2 Health Buck coupon to purchase additional fruits and vegetables, for every five dollars in EBT dollars they spend.

All left-over food is donated to City Harvest and other food pantries.

## Children's Reading and Activities

First Wednesday of the month

10 am – 1 or 2 pm

Greenmarket Dag  
Hammar skjold Plaza

With the  
Grand Central Branch  
New York Public Library



active voice in monitoring safety issues surrounding high-rise construction in the area, a particular concern in light of a tragic crane collapse on East 51st Street in 2008 that killed seven, including six construction workers, and injured many more. And the organization has worked to assure adequate levels of bus service for the neighborhood, improve the area's parks and playgrounds, and most recently, has spoken up with its concerns regarding the city's East Midtown rezoning plans.

“As we enter our seventh decade, we hope some of our past achievements will encourage newcomers in our neighborhood to join our cause,” says Curtis. “The more voices we have speaking up about our concerns, the more effective we can be in assuring that Turtle Bay remains a quality place to live and work.”

### 60 Years Old *Continued from page 1*

ers of Third Avenue on the other. Three men have chaired the organization since its founding: James Amster, an interior decorator whose home at Amster Yard became an anchor in the area; then Peter Detmold, whose real estate business specialized in East Midtown brownstones; and since 1972, Bill Curtis, a graphic designer who first moved to Turtle Bay in the 1960s. “The strong leadership of Amster and Detmold during our early years has helped



The Efreim Zimbalist House on East 49th Street today houses apartments.

us maintain the influence we still have today,” says Curtis. “The issues may be different, but our goal is the same – to maintain the livability of our East Midtown neighborhood for future generations to come.”

Here are some of the TBA's most notable efforts through the years:

- In the mid-1960s, the group fought to stop the building of a big municipal

parking garage on 48th Street and Second Avenue, and successfully worked to minimize a mammoth expansion of UN and affiliated offices that would have taken over residential areas.

- In the 1970s, in what many consider one of the TBA's greatest achievements, neighbors stopped a huge Long Island Rail Road passenger terminal planned for the northwest corner of 48th Street and Third Avenue. And the group fought to keep helicopter service – noisy and potentially dangerous – from continuing atop the nearby Pan Am Building (now the MetLife Building).
- In the 1980s, the organization was instrumental in the successful effort to limit the building heights in the area by “downzoning” the Beekman Place district and Turtle Bay mid-blocks between First and Third avenues. And it also led the drive to redesign and refurbish Peter Detmold Park.
- In the 1990s, the TBA fought for the reopening of the 48th Street ramp to the FDR Drive, easing traffic on First Avenue. And, in an important move to enhance the neighborhood, it spearheaded the rejuvenation of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza and the opening of the Katherine Hepburn Garden.
- More recently, the TBA has been an



James Amster, who founded the TBA in 1957, in the garden of his home at Amster Yard in the 1970s. Today, Amster Yard is the New York home of the Cervantes Institute, and the garden is open to the public.

## Project CART

Free Transportation  
for Manhattan Seniors

For more information  
call 212-956-0855  
from 9 am - 5 pm

Funded by the NYC  
Department for the Aging

## DHP Hosts Concert in Wind-Up to 2017 Sing for Hope

Dag Hammarskjold Plaza echoed with the sounds of Broadway and other show tunes when Daniel Safek, pianist from the smash hit, "Hamilton," hit the ivories on



Pianist Daniel Safek plays show tunes on Sing for Hope piano in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza.

the evening of June 20. Safek played many songs and took requests from the audience. Two additional concerts, on June 19 and 23, featured pianist Richard Fegan.



### Supermarket *Continued from page 1*

communities, and outlines government strategies that could help protect traditional stores.

The report lists three factors as causing the crisis in traditional bricks-and-mortar grocery retailing: new development, bankruptcy, and excessive rent and gentrification. Communities and local government representatives have tried to negotiate rental terms that supermarkets can afford, but have met with no, or limited, success. The arrival of membership clubs and internet-based businesses has stiffened the competition and further undermined the

ability of retail stores to operate profitably. What can be done?

Brewer's report suggests these actions.

- **Update and expand FRESH Zoning**, the decade-old study that created zoning to incentivize grocery store construction. A related suggestion is the introduction, by the City Planning Commission, of floor area bonuses or permits to transfer or sell floor area bonuses to CPC-designated sites within the FRESH zone.
- **Eliminate the city's Commercial Rent Tax for supermarkets.** Brewer and City Council Member Corey Johnson have sponsored Intro 1472-2017, which

would fully exempt affordable supermarkets from the CRT, which adds nearly 4 percent to the gross rents of businesses located between 96th Street and Murray Street.

- **Reactivate Empire Zones** to unlock tax incentives in the parts of Manhattan that are not within the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone (UMEZ).
- **Establish an interagency task force** to identify and eliminate supermarket rules and regulations that are inapplicable in the face of technological or market changes, and which fail to promote the public good.
- **Establish (and enforce) commercial loading zones** in front of every supermarket. The faster a store restocks inventory, the more it can shave from its costs through efficiency and reduced spoilage.
- **Introduce community marketing** that incentivizes local supermarkets to sell affordable high quality fresh foods that promote healthy eating and home preparation.

In the meantime, we will wait and see if city government can deliver solutions in a new economy that has changed the daily routines of many people living here.

To read full report, visit [manhattanbp.nyc.gov](http://manhattanbp.nyc.gov).



### TBA MEMBERSHIP COUPON

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

#### Annual Membership Dues

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior \$15   | <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 \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

- 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

### BOOK ORDER FORM

**Manhattan's Turtle Bay**  
**Story of a Midtown Neighborhood**  
A Contemporary History of Turtle Bay  
Arcadia Publishing • 160 pages; 50 photos  
**\$15.00**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ book/s,  
plus \$3 per book for postage/handling

Make check payable to:  
**Turtle Bay Association**

Mail to:  
**Turtle Bay Association, 224 East 47th Street,  
New York, NY 10017**

Sales proceeds benefit the Turtle Bay Association.