

# TURTLE BAY ASSOCIATION

224 East 47th Street, New York, NY 10017

TO THE TURTLE BAY ASSOCIATION MEMBERS:

MARCH 18, 2008

This issue of the Turtle Bay News went to press several weeks before the tragic events of March 15. An enormous crane, towering over 300 feet above the street, abruptly collapsed, severely damaging several buildings including 300 E. 51st Street and flattening the four story 305 East 50th Street. Seven people were killed, six construction workers and a woman visiting from Miami, and at least two dozen of our neighbors were injured, three critically. Damage will run into the many millions; the lives of hundreds of Turtle Bay dwellers are in upheaval. Many remain homeless.

303 East 51st Street has, since its foundations were dug, been a top preoccupation of the Turtle Bay Association. We have, with our members, filed complaint upon complaint with the Department of Buildings (DOB). We have brought it to the attention of our elected officials, here Assemblyman Jonathan Bing and Councilmember Jessica Lappin. We are organizing a neighborhood watch, not only at 303 East 51st, but also for all of Turtle Bay. On February 19, we arranged, through Lappin and Keith Powers of Bing's office, to meet with DOB Manhattan Borough Commissioner Santulli. Although the emphasis was on the controversial zoning issues associated with 303 E 51st, we also brought Santulli current with our concerns about safety and overtime work. Nonetheless, conditions worsened at the site.

As more and more complaints poured into the TBA office, the DOB, and Community Board 6, another meeting took place, March 4, at the CB6 Office. The main issue was now job safety. We attended, along with CB6 members, a representative each of City Planning, Bing, and Lappin. Also invited were representatives of Kennelly Development, 303 E. 51st site owner. They declined to attend. It was agreed that a citizens watch should immediately begin not just for Turtle Bay but for the entire CB6 jurisdiction (Turtle Bay, with but one eighth of CB6's area, has one third of the new construction currently listed in CB6 by DOB on the Web). We immediately agreed to participate to the fullest extent.

That same day, the crane tower, atop which sits the operator's cab, the massive engine, counterweight, and another 100 feet of pivoting boom, was some 18 stories high, of which the top 100 feet were unbraced. We promptly lodged a complaint to DOB via 311, the only one so filed in the City. An inspector leisurely arrived on site two days later and determined the crane in compliance with code and plans, defying the fact that the rig, which stood apart from rather up against the rising building, was already top heavy. Further DOB inspections, including one on March 14 and the other in the morning of the 15th, reaffirmed the previous faulty determination. Nothing was said about common sense exceeding of code.

The stage was set for disaster. On the morning of March 15 the crane was "jumped." Sections were lifted from the street and inserted them one by one into the tower. By mid-day it was an extra 50 feet higher than before, still with no new braces in place. At 2:20 that afternoon, the crane, a vital brace severed by a falling 6 ton component, gave way. Coming after the series of earlier construction accidents in New York - some fatal - this collapse was, according to Mayor Bloomberg, the worst in City history,

Where do we go from here? First, we must help our afflicted neighbors, and TBA has immediately sprung into action. Second, we must recognize that DOB, whatever its problems, cannot station an inspector in each of the thousands of building jobs in the City. Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer is urging an independent Construction Safety Council, free of ties to DOB and the construction/real estate businesses, that would oversee all major work, at the very least in Manhattan, better yet, throughout all New York City. We enthusiastically support Stringer. However, even a dedicated Council cannot adequately cover the entire City. The only way that can be done is through the eyes, ears, and voices of its citizens. We have already taken the first steps in Turtle Bay toward that end. It is up to you, our members and neighbors, to join hands with us.

Bill Curtis - President

Bruce A. Silberblatt - Vice President - Zoning/Land Use Chairman

Tel: 212-751-5465 Fax: 212-751-4941 Email: tbaoffice@mindspring.com

# Turtle Bay News

A Publication of the Turtle Bay Association

Spring 2008 Vol. 51, No. 1

## Construction Woes: What's Going On?

BY BRUCE A. SILBERBLATT

As anyone in Turtle Bay can witness, demolition and construction for major new buildings is ubiquitous. There are now empty sites at 823 United Nations Plaza, 315 East 46th Street, 959 First Avenue and 950 Second Avenue, where developers await a propitious time to start building. Construction is proceeding at the new U. S. Mission to the United Nations (southwest corner of 45th Street and U.N. Plaza), at 250 East 49th Street (southwest corner of Second Avenue), and at 303 East 51st Street. We know, through publicity and on-site displays, what is going up at the first two. On the other hand, as of late February, 303 East 51st Street remains an unknown – except that it is, relentlessly, rising skyward.

There's no sales office. There's no on-site rendering. There's nothing on the developer's web site. What's going on at 303 East 51st Street? And what about the corner lot, 964-966 Second Avenue?

The developer, Kennelly Development, has obtained Department of Buildings (DOB) approval for a straight-up structure at 303 East 51st Street designed by architect Garrett Gourlay. It will, when finished, rise 43 stories, 510 feet above the street – six feet higher than the U. N. Secretariat. While normally a shorter tower-on-base would have been expected on the site – similar to 310 East 53rd

Street and the Veneto two blocks north – Kennelly has successfully opted for a sheer tower, the easternmost eight feet of which overlap into the low-rise zoning district characteristic of Turtle Bay's side streets.

As is now evident from the rising concrete superstructure, the slender structure will be copiously adorned with balconies. According to DOB, it will contain 182 apartments and will have ground floor retail and tenant facilities including a swimming pool on the roof.

The Kennelly firm assembled its property in two, possibly more, stages. The present zoning lot, which was pieced together in 2006, includes 303-305-307 East 51st Street, 304 East 52nd Street, and 970-972-974-976 Second Avenue. The existing townhouse at 304 East 52nd Street remains as is; the four Second Avenue buildings are, for the present, to be razed to the top of the first floor.

Kennelly also controls, either directly or indirectly, 964-966 Second Avenue at the northeast corner at 51st Street and 309 East 51st Street, although neither are part of his zoning lot. 309 East 51st Street has been demolished, probably to provide open space next

*continued on page 7*

## Turtle Bay Meets Needs of Preschool Toddlers

BY RITA ROWAN

It's noticeable: Baby carriages and strollers are becoming commonplace in Turtle Bay – along Second Avenue; in MacArthur Playground, teeming with little ones on warm days; and at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, where a visitor is sure to meet moms, dads, nannies and kids on any day of the year.

Yes, families with young children are being attracted to Turtle Bay, drawn by new residential buildings opening up, as well as the fine older housing in the area. As they move here, parents will be pleased to find the neighborhood generously endowed with preschool facilities offering a good variety of programs and approaches to early education. This issue of Turtle Bay News offers a guide to searching for the right program for your child. While the newsletter can't include all the information necessary to make a decision, the listing is intended simply

*continued on page 4*



**Turtle Bay on Fifth Avenue.** Turtle Bay was featured prominently on Fifth Avenue recently, when a new book about the neighborhood, "Manhattan's Turtle Bay," was displayed in the window of Barnes & Noble bookstore at Fifth Avenue and 46th Street. The contemporary history, published in January, is available in bookstores, online or through the Turtle Bay Association. (See TBA order coupon, back page.)

## Mark Your Calendar

- **Sunday, May 4**  
Turtle Bay Street Fair  
Second Avenue from 43rd to 53rd  
212-751-5465
- **Saturday, May 10**  
Katharine Hepburn Garden Party  
1-3 p.m.  
Dag Hammarskjold Plaza  
212-826-8980; 212-751-5465
- **Thursday, May 15**  
Children's Puppet Show  
MacArthur Playground, 10:30 a.m.  
(See *Turtle Bay Happenings*, page 8)  
212-751-5465
- **Wednesday, May 28**  
Outdoor Art Show  
High School of Art & Design  
10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Dag Hammarskjold Plaza  
212-826-8980
- **Saturday, May 31**  
17th Precinct Street Fair  
Lexington Avenue from 42nd to 57th  
212-826-3228
- **Thursday, June 12**  
"Manhattan's Turtle Bay"  
Book Discussion and Signing  
Cervantes Institute, 6 p.m.  
(See *Turtle Bay Happenings*, page 8)  
212-751-5465; 212-308-7720
- **Saturday, June 28**  
AutoShowCase  
Classic Cars on Display  
10 a.m.-6 p.m.  
Dag Hammarskjold Plaza  
917-952-6369
- **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, August,  
December)
- **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](mailto:tbaoffice@mindspring.com)

Web Site: [www.turtlebaynyc.org](http://www.turtlebaynyc.org)

Check our Bulletin Board:

East side of Second Avenue,  
between 48th and 49th Streets,  
on outside wall of the supermarket.

## Year-round Garden in Our Midst

**M**ost passersby assume it's a mirage. After all, how else can one explain a 12-story greenhouse on East 43rd Street between First and Second Avenues.

Yet the glassed-in garden is no fantasy. This hidden-in-plain-sight park, which is actually inside the Ford Foundation Building, is open to the public every weekday (except holidays) from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. The entrance is adjacent to Tudor City and surrounding brownstones.

Completed in 1967, the 8,500 square foot atrium houses a miniature forest, filled with towering trees, a fountain that recycles rain water and more than 22,000 plants. Offices line two walls of the cube. The other two walls, facing south and east, are made of glass, giving the public visual access to the garden.

The entire structure was designed by Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo and Associates, who wanted to create a contribution to the city. The garden was planned, Roche wrote, as "...a place to walk around...even in the depths of winter."

While the garden is magical all year round, it is most amazing on summer mornings. That's when the sun comes pouring in through the eastern wall. As it hits the fountain it illuminates the flowering plants from below, turning the garden into an

impressionist's blaze of light and color. Seasonal plantings climb the office walls. Although there is no formal seating, brick steps invite the visitor to rest a while and contemplate this man-made version of the natural world.

When the garden was opened 40 years ago, it was described by *The New York Times* as "one of the most romantic environments ever devised by corporate man." Today, the Ford Foundation garden remains the most romantic of environments. Granted landmark status in 1998, this giant greenhouse is now a permanent oasis in the landscape of the neighborhood.



A look inside the Ford Foundation "greenhouse."

*Editor's Note: This article, by Ravelle Brickman, is reprinted with permission of Murray Hill Life, the publication of the Murray Hill Neighborhood Association. Many thanks to Ravelle and our Murray Hill friends!*

## Waterside Project Heads to City Council

The City Planning Commission has approved, with some modifications, developer Sheldon Solow's huge project at the former Con Edison Waterside site just south of Turtle Bay. The application now goes to the City Council for review.

The commission cut the size of the project by about 20 percent. The tower at 685 First Avenue will be scaled back to 600 feet and built "tower-on-base," but the other tall slab towers remain. The project still includes an office building, but it is to be reduced in height. As reported earlier, the project will have 600 units of affordable housing. There will be a school on the site.

Under the approved application, 39th and 40th Streets will not be returned to public

domain; they remain as private drives primarily serving the project. Solow's request for a zoning change from manufacturing to commercial will remain for those parcels east of First Avenue, but is subject to a "restrictive covenant" that should protect the residential towers from being converted to commercial use in the future. A huge parking garage continues to be a part of the project.

The community and its elected officials continue to argue that the modified project is too tall, too big, too intrusive, and that no office tower should be built on the site.

The Commission approval came on January 28. Next steps: the City Council has

*continued on page 5*

## Newsorthy Notes

**Toy Drive Helps Children.** The TBA raised close to \$2,000 and collected hundreds of toys and clothing items for needy children at the annual Holiday Toy Drive and Party held Sunday, December 9, at McAnn's on 1st. Donations went to the Northside Center for Child Development, Single Parents Resource Center and God's Love, We Deliver. The TBA has been holding the Holiday Toy Drive since 1986.

**Remembering Kate.** The papers of longtime neighbor Katharine Hepburn were recently donated to the New York Public Library's Theatre Division. Now, the library plans a series of early evening programs with some of Ms. Hepburn's friends, relatives and colleagues to read and reminisce about the famous actress. March 31, screen director Anthony Harvey; April 12, Ms. Hepburn's niece Katharine Houghton; April 28, Dick Cavett and Marian Seldes. Events are free, but

tickets required. Call 212-642-0142 for information.

**Upcoming Fair.** The Turtle Bay Street Fair, scheduled for Sunday, May 4, along Second Avenue, promises to be better than ever. New vendors and entertainment are planned. Please visit the TBA booth at the corner of 48th Street.

**Big Tent on the Lawn.** Turtle Bay was "celebrity central" on the night of February 4, as a big tent on the United Nations North Lawn housed a star-studded event to benefit Raising Malawi and Unicef. Madonna performed before guests including Tom Cruise, Drew Barrymore, Chris Rock, Debra Messing, Jennifer Lopez, Gwyneth Paltrow, Salma Hayek and...on and on. Meanwhile, residents in neighboring buildings complained bitterly of the noise from portable generators running days before and after the event, and the loud, vibrating sound system the night of the party. The event, sponsored

by Madonna and Gucci, reportedly raised \$5.5 million to fight AIDS in Africa.

**Doorman and Friend.** Residents of 311 East 50th Street, as well as those from neighboring buildings, are mourning the sudden death of Terry Colreavy, doorman at 311 for the past 33 years. The affable Colreavy, 64, typically spent his worktime hours on the sidewalk directly outside his building, and became good friends not only with his own building's residents, but with others living on the block as well. "You might say he was doorman to our entire block," says one neighbor. "We felt like he was part of our family."

**Book Worms.** In response to a story in the last issue of Turtle Bay News, a new book club has been formed in the neighborhood. The story attracted plenty of members, but anyone still interested can call the TBA office for the club's contact information.

## Berntsen to the 17th As Commanding Officer

Captain Ted Berntsen, a 19-year veteran of the Police Department, has been named commanding officer of the 17th Precinct.

Captain Berntsen began his career patrolling the housing developments on the Lower East Side, and later patrolled the East New York/ Brownsville section of Brooklyn and the streets of Greenwich Village's 6th Precinct.



Captain Ted Berntsen

He has served as a sergeant in the 9th Precinct (East Village/Alphabet City) and as a lieutenant in the 76th Precinct in Brooklyn. He was promoted to captain in 2004 and most recently has been the executive officer of the Midtown South Precinct. He was named the 17th's commanding officer last December, succeeding Deputy Inspector John Wallace.



At the TBA's Holiday Party and Toy Drive last December were top row, left to right: Grace Polk with a cuddly friend; Nancy Soloway and Marty Wolf. Bottom row, left to right: City Councilmember Jessica Lappin, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, little Charlotte Bing and her dad Assemblyman Jonathan Bing, and City Councilmember Dan Garodnick; Bunny Blei and Roz Gilbert. (Story appears in Newsorthy Notes, above.)

---

# Parent's Guide to Preschools in the Area

continued from page 1

to help parents get started in their search for opportunities for next school year:

The “jewel in the crown” is undoubtedly the **Vanderbilt YMCA**, with its excellent pre-school program. Located at 224 East 47th Street, the Y’s fees are modest compared with most other programs in the area.

- Early Childhood Program: for children 6 months to 5 years; year-round, five days a week; flexible schedules.
- Gradual Separation Program: for 2-year-olds, September to June.
- The Y’s preschool curriculum addresses all areas of development – art, stories, singing, literacy, free and supervised play, physical education.
- Contact: Sally Conroy, 212-912-2507 or [sconroy@ymcany.org](mailto:sconroy@ymcany.org).

**The Family School**, in a bright and attractive facility at 323 East 47th Street, carries on the innovative theory and practices of the early educator Maria Montessori.

- Early Childhood Program: 3 to 6 years.
- Toddler Program: 18 months to 3 years.
- The programs operate from September to June, full and part-time schedules.
- Contact: Lesley Nan Haberman, 212-688-5950 or [famschool@aol.com](mailto:famschool@aol.com).

Having the United Nations as a neighbor means opportunities for a culturally diverse program at the **International Preschools**, 330 East 45th Street. The school serves children from 18 months to 5 years.

- Creche Program: accepts children 1.6 to 2.2 years.
- Toddler Program: 2.3 years to 3.2 years.
- The Nursery Program: 3.0 to 4.0 years.
- The school’s emphasis is on sharing of cultures and gaining an international awareness.
- Contact: Valerie Kennedy, 212-371-8604 or [www.ipsnyc.org](http://www.ipsnyc.org).

For families seeking a church-affiliated program, the **First Church Preschool** at the First Reformed Episcopal Church, 317 East 50th Street, offers a morning program for 2- to 4- years-olds.

- Contact: Susan Harrington, 212-755-0995.

In the afternoon at the First Reformed Episcopal Church, the **French Preschool of New York** offers a French language immersion program for 4-year-olds.

- Contact: Claire Delaroche, 646-573-6941.

The **Aaron School** is a newcomer to Turtle Bay, having opened its doors in 2003 as a kindergarten and early elementary school for children with potential learning challenges.

- Located at 309 East 45th Street, it is a member of The MetSchools, Inc. network.
- Contact: Linda Gardner, 212-867-9594

**Little Dreamers of New York City**, 336 East 53rd Street, offers preschool education for 2- to 6-year olds. It has its own private garden and outdoor play space. Curriculum includes exposure to foreign language, science, culture and developmental skills.

- Contact: Carolyn Faith, 212-486-0597.

On the fringes of Turtle Bay, two programs are worth noting:

The charming Sutton Place branch of the **Garden House School of New York** is located at 40 Sutton Place. It serves children aged 3 to 6 years of age and operates from September to May, five days a week. It offers a covered outdoor play area.

- Contact: 212-421-3282 or [www.gardenhouseschool.org](http://www.gardenhouseschool.org).

The **Community Preschool** at St. Bartholomew’s Church has been in existence for 30 years. Located in the community building at 109 East 50th Street, it provides a high quality family-centered early childhood program for children 2.4 to 6 years of age.



Preschool groups are a familiar sight in Turtle Bay

- Contact: Mary Ponce, 212-378-0238 or [ponce@stbarts.org](mailto:ponce@stbarts.org).

And finally, Turtle Bay families interested in music education for their preschoolers can check out the wonderful opportunities at the **Turtle Bay Music School**, 244 East 52nd Street. TBMS offerings include:

- Tuneful Tots program: 18 months to three years.
- Tuneful 3’s and 4’s program for 3- and 4-year-olds.
- Tuneful Kinders program: for 4- and 5-year-olds.
- TBMS also offers Suzuki string instruction for children 3 and older.
- All programs follow a sequence of 16 weeks, and there is also a program of summer sessions.
- Contact: Patti Onorato, 212-753-8811, ext. 14, or [info@tbms.org](mailto:info@tbms.org).

– Rita Rowan, the writer of this article, recently retired after a 40-year career in education. She was Director of The Community School, a program for children with special needs.

## Valentine Party Warms a Cold Winter Night



Friends and neighbors gathered on February 11, one of the coldest evenings of the year, to enjoy dinner and dancing at the TBA's annual Valentine Party. It was the 24th year of the traditional "Love Thy Neighborhood" get-together. Top row, left to right: Bob Baublitz and Arthur Ball; Carl Lana and Ed Lewando; Jessika Kifer and Richard Doyle; Lenore Setzler. Middle row, left to right: Dolores Constantinou, George Vellonakis and Brooke Volkerty; Jeanne Bauer and Colleen Jones; Hisako Sugarman. Bottom left corner: Anne Saxon-Hersh; and at right corner, Jennifer Glass and Don Guyton.

## Mexican Grill Greets New T'Bay Neighbors

When Qdoba Mexican Grill opened its 463rd restaurant – but only the chain's third in Manhattan – it celebrated with a Turtle Bay "VIP Party." For four hours, from 5 to 9 p.m. on January 21, the new restaurant, located at 875 Third Avenue at 53rd Street, offered patrons dinner for only \$5, with all proceeds donated to the Turtle Bay Association.

"It's part of Qdoba's business strategy to enter a community by being 'good neighbors,'" says Sally Lee, Qdoba's regional marketing specialist.

Qdoba, a "fast casual" dining establishment,

is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner seven days a week. It offers home delivery within a 10-block radius after 5 p.m., and also caters private events.

Founded in 1995 in Colorado, Qdoba has big plans for Manhattan, with two more restaurants scheduled for Midtown openings within the next few months.

Meanwhile, Qdoba's generosity at its Turtle Bay "VIP" opening party resulted in a donation of some \$500 to the TBA.

Qdoba is a TBA business member. Welcome to the neighborhood, Qdoba!

*Waterside* continued from page 2

50 days to review the application. The Council's Land Use Subcommittee held a public hearing in late February, after which the full Land Use Committee was to send the application, with any recommendations for changes, back to the Commission. The 50-day clock stops at that point and restarts once the Commission sends the application, with any of its modifications, back to the Council. The Council then has the remainder of its 50 days to pass or turn down the application. It then goes to the mayor, who has five days for approval or veto. The Council can override a mayoral veto.

# Keeping Irving Berlin's Music Alive on Beekman

**W**hen John Wallowitch, noted cabaret performer and long-time Turtle Bay resident, died last summer at the age of 81, some thought a decades-old tradition of holiday caroling in the neighborhood might come to an end. But friends and admirers of Wallowitch have kept it going, as they joined together this past Christmas Eve to carol in front of what had been Irving Berlin's home for more than 40 years. The house, at the corner of Beekman Place and 50th Street, is now owned by the Government of Luxembourg.



John Wallowitch

A look at how the caroling tradition got started appears in the recently published book, "Manhattan's Turtle Bay: Story of a Midtown Neighborhood." The following is an excerpt from the book:

*Cabaret singer and songwriter John Wallowitch moved to a 51st Street brownstone near Beekman Place in 1967, unaware that a music legend lived just around the corner. "When someone told me Irving Berlin lived at 17 Beekman, it simply galvanized me. I couldn't believe it!" the Juilliard-trained musician recalled years later.*

*On Wallowitch's first Christmas Eve in the neighborhood, he was out walking his dog when he passed Irving Berlin's house. He stopped and sang silently, to himself, "White Christmas" and "I'll be Loving You Always," two of his favorite Berlin tunes. "It was a very emotional experience for me, and it became my own personal Christmas Eve tradition for many years," he said.*

*Then on Christmas Eve in 1983, the year Berlin was 95, Wallowitch asked a group of 17 friends – talented musicians all – to join him for his ritual serenade. "We met at my place and then walked to the corner near Mr. Berlin's house where we sang, out loud this time, 'White Christmas,' then 'Always,' and then 'White Christmas' once again."*

*The house was dark and they assumed no one was home. Much to their surprise, as they were leaving, the lights throughout the house lit up and a housekeeper came to the door to invite*

*them in. "Mr. Berlin would like to thank you," she said.*

*"We were simply astonished," said Wallowitch, "Here we were face-to-face with the greatest composer of our lifetime in his own house! He greeted us with his big bright eyes and shook hands with each of the guys and hugged the gals. 'Thank you,' he said, 'that was the nicest Christmas present I ever had.'"...*

*...The group continued to sing outside Berlin's house each Christmas Eve until 1988. The next September, Berlin died, at his home, at the age of 101. Out of respect, the carolers didn't sing at the house that Christmas Eve. But the tradition resumed in 1990. The serenade became an annual tribute to the memory of Irving Berlin and the more than 40 years he lived at 17 Beekman Place.*



Gregory Moore and friends continued a tradition this past Christmas Eve, caroling in front of Irving Berlin's home.

Since the home became "Luxembourg House" after Berlin's death, the caroling tradition has continued. Luxembourg, which uses the house as offices for its U.N. Mission and Consulate General and often hosts musical events on the site, has opened its doors to serve holiday drinks to the carolers each Christmas Eve. "Luxembourg House is truly honoring the Berlin legacy," John Wallowitch said shortly before he died.

This past Christmas Eve, Wallowitch himself was honored as his many admirers, with support from Luxembourg House, gathered at Irving Berlin's former home to carry on the tradition Wallowitch had started – remembering the songs of the great Berlin, and especially his unforgettable "White Christmas."

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



### Annual Membership Dues

- Senior \$10
- Individual \$25
- Family \$30
- Business \$40
- Benefactor \$100
- 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. 47<sup>th</sup> St., New York, NY 10017

### Turtle Bay News

Editor: Pamela Hanlon

Contributors: Terri Heveran,  
Olga Hoffmann, Bill Huxley,

Millie Margiotta, Patricia Q. McDougald,  
Rita Rowan, Bruce Silberblatt

Photography: Vivian Gordon

**Construction** continued from page 1

to the rising tower. As for 964-966 Second Avenue, DOB approval was granted for a 16-story building (designated as 301 East 51st Street) containing 11 floor-through and duplex apartments. To be designed by Isaac & Stern, it remains unclear as to how it will coordinate with its far taller Gourlay-designed neighbor to the east.

### Neighbors Are Concerned

Construction at 303, both in foundations and now in superstructure, has been halted by various city "Stop Work" orders issued for an assortment of safety violations (examples: no sidewalk shed, no protection of next door buildings, no fire stand pipe). In addition, there has been unauthorized work both before and after permitted hours on weekdays and, even worse, on weekends. Long-suffering neighbors have complained about these disturbances by notifying 311, which, while creating a paper record, is ineffectual because by the time a DOB inspector arrives many hours later, there is, of course, nothing left on which to take action. The box, at top right, includes the best numbers for neighbors to call with complaints about illegal construction work.

Meanwhile, in mid-February, DOB announced it would establish a dedicated "after hours" inspection team. It reported:

"Complaints related to illegal after-hours construction constituted 5.3 percent of

the 134,427 complaints the Buildings Department received in 2007. However, the Department has, until now, lacked a permanent after-hours force to combat this illegal construction. ...six inspectors will be dedicated to cracking down on contractors and developers who work after normal business hours without obtaining a variance from the Department to do so. Once formed, the After-Hours Inspection Team will immediately respond to after-hours construction complaints and issue Stop Work Orders for illegal construction."

It should be noted that certain after-hours tasks are legal. Erecting a crane, particularly a large one like that operating at 303 East 51st Street, must be done on weekends; the city specifically bars this work being done during the week. Concrete poured during the winter requires heat to combat freezing, and personnel must be on hand to tend it after hours. Obvious emergencies can be done beyond normal hours. Other than that, the hours are: Weekdays: 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; no work on Saturday, Sunday, or legal holidays.

### What Residents Can Do

At the suggestion of the TBA, Assemblyman Jonathan Bing and Councilmember Lappin have stepped in so that the remaining construction at 303 East 51st Street proceeds in a safe manner. Lappin says it is developers' "obligation to the community

**Where to Complain:**

Complaints should be filed *both* at 311 and the 17th Precinct (weekdays 212-826-3228; 212-826-3211 on weekends and evenings) and the Turtle Bay Association (212-751-5465, email: [tbaoffice@mindspring.com](mailto:tbaoffice@mindspring.com))

In addition, they can be filed with:

- Assemblyman Jonathan Bing (212-605-0937), e-mail: [bingj@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:bingj@assembly.state.ny.us)
- Councilmember Dan Garodnick (212-818-0580), e-mail: [garodnick@council.nyc.ny.us](mailto:garodnick@council.nyc.ny.us). (south side of 49th St. and below)
- Councilmember Jessica Lappin (212-535-5554), e-mail: [lappin@council.nyc.ny.us](mailto:lappin@council.nyc.ny.us). (north side of 49th St. and above)

**Be Alert! Be Concerned!**

to be good neighbors and go out of their way to accommodate a neighborhood during construction." Accordingly, Kennelly has designated Vincent Salvatoriello of RCG Construction (212-755-7511) as the firm's contact concerning timely complaints or questions about the construction. This is a significant step in the right direction, following an example created for the erection of the Trump World Tower, a model that also included periodic liaison meetings between builder, community and officials. In any case, Turtle Bay residents should make known their complaints about obvious violations to the city, to our elected officials and to the TBA.

Trying though it may be, let's all try to keep the disturbance to a minimum!

**Turtle Bay Association**

President: William E. Curtis

Vice Presidents: Millie Margiotta, Dolores Marsh, Bruce Silberblatt

Treasurer: Francine Irwin

Secretary: Marie-Louise Handal

Directors: Jed Abrams, Ethel Bendove, Bunny Blei, Orin Buck, Meryl Brodsky, Barbara Connolly, William E. Curtis, Denise Hamilton, Marie-Louise Handal, Pamela Hanlon, Olga Hoffmann, Bill Huxley, Francine Irwin, Richard Irwin, Millie Margiotta, Dolores Marsh, Patricia Q. McDougald, Ron Palau, Michael Resnick, Carol Rinzler, Jeannie Sakol, Helen Shapiro, Bruce Silberblatt



Jack Marshall and Karola Sallan



Laura Carver and Michael Resnick

**And now...the REAL Jack and Karola and Laura and Michael.** Turtle Bay News apologizes for an error in the last issue of the newsletter that misidentified the couple at left as Laura Carver and Michael Resnick. It is actually Jack Marshall and Karola Sallan. Laura Carver and Michael Resnick are shown at right. Both photos were taken in November at TBA's 50th anniversary gala party at the Japan Society. Thanks to the two couples for being so good-humored about the mix-up.



## Turtle Bay Happenings

## Art & Culture

**Children's Puppet Show.** The Swedish Marionette Theatre will perform "Cinderella Samba," followed by a puppet-making workshop, in MacArthur Playground, Thursday, May 15, 10:30 a.m. Presented by New York City Parks Foundation; sponsored by TBA. Free. Info: 212-751-5465

**Book Discussion.** Pamela Hanlon will discuss and read excerpts from her book, "Manhattan's Turtle Bay," at 6 p.m., Thursday, June 12, at Cervantes Institute at Amster Yard, 211-215 East 49th Street. Book signing to follow. Event sponsored jointly by the Institute and the Turtle Bay

Association. Free. Info: 212-751-5465; 212-308-7720.

**Japanese Lacquer.** Exhibit of traditional and rare examples of lacquer works by Shibata Zeshin. Japan Society Gallery, 333 East 47th Street, Mar. 21-June 18. Daily except Monday. \$12; \$10 seniors and students. Free on Friday evenings, from 6 to 9 p.m. Info: 212-832-1155 or [www.japansociety.org](http://www.japansociety.org).

**Turtle Bay Music School.** Four Carnegie Hall Neighborhood Concerts, Saturdays 1 p.m. April 5, Sharon Katz and her Peace Train; May 3, Kua Dixon and her

Swing Quartet; May 31, Talujon Percussion Quartet; June 7, Hypnotic Brass Ensemble. 244 East 52nd Street. Free. Info: 212-752-8811 or [www.tbms.org](http://www.tbms.org).

**St. Bart's Players.** Stephen Sondheim's musical "Follies." April 24 to May 4. 8 p.m.; matinees on Saturday and Sunday. \$25; \$23 seniors, students. 109 East 50th Street. Call St. Bart's Box Office 212-378-0248.

**Beekman Hill Ensemble.** Concert featuring violin, cello, piano and voice at the First Reformed Episcopal Church, East 50th Street. Friday, April 25, at 7:30 p.m. \$15. Info: 212-755-0997.

- compiled by Rita Rowan

## Join TBA; Join the Vanderbilt YMCA

One of the "best deals around" awaits Turtle Bay Association members at the Vanderbilt YMCA. Located right in the center of Turtle Bay, at 224 East 47th Street, the Y offers TBA members 20 percent off the full Y membership, plus 50 percent off the \$125 "joiner" fee. Vanderbilt Y rates range from \$116 monthly for a family membership to \$50 monthly for an older adult membership.

So, for an annual TBA membership fee

of only \$30 for a family, \$25 for an individual and \$10 for a senior, TBA members can save hundreds of dollars a year on a Y membership.

"As a community-based organization, we want to reach out to our neighbors," says Janet LoCurto, the Y's membership director. "Offering this valuable discount to TBA members helps us to do that, and at the same time brings us new members that we might not otherwise have attracted."

The newly renovated Vanderbilt YMCA offers a full range of group exercise classes, cardio center, two swimming pools, free weights, life fitness circuit and much more.

The Vanderbilt Y, a good neighbor indeed!

## 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, United Nations renovation project and East River waterfront opportunities.
- is closely watching neighborhood construction sites for safety and other concerns.
- has joined other neighborhood interests in opposing MTA's planned utility building on East 50th Street, which has now been modified.
- has joined with other neighborhood 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 neighborhood events, including the recent Love Thy Neighborhood Valentine Party and upcoming Turtle Bay Street Fair.

### ORDER FORM

#### MANHATTAN'S TURTLE BAY: STORY OF A MIDTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

- As a TBA member, I would like a copy of the book for \$10 (\$13 if it is to be mailed). *This a 50% discount off the retail price and is available to TBA members (one per member) as long as supplies last.*
- I would like \_\_\_\_ copies of the book for \$20 per copy, of which \$10 per copy shall be a contribution to the TBA. *If books are to be mailed, please include \$3 per book for postage/handling.*



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Return order form and check to: Turtle Bay Association  
224 East 47th Street, New York, NY 10017  
212-751-5465 for information; or [tbaooffice@mindspring.com](mailto:tbaooffice@mindspring.com)

*Manhattan's Turtle Bay*, written by Turtle Bay resident Pamela Hanlon and published by Arcadia, was released in January 2008. 160 pages, 50 photos. Author's proceeds from all sales of the book are being donated to the TBA.