Turtle Bay News

A Publication of the Turtle Bay Association

March 2016 Vol. 59, No. 1

TBA Supports Filing to Stop Bauhouse Superscraper in Sutton Place

ed by Ben Kallos, City Council Member District 5, the East River 50s Alliance filed a sweeping residential rezoning plan on January 21. Co-applications to the Department of City Planning were filed by Council Member Daniel Garodnick, District 4, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, and State Senator Liz Krueger.

The new zoning plan for the Manhattan area between 52nd and 59th Streets east of First Avenue, would restrict supertowers and over-development in the neighborhood with a contextual height cap of up to 260 feet, incentives for schools, and a requirement for mandatory inclusionary housing.

The new rezoning plan was sparked by the out-of-scale 1,000 foot megatower proposed by the Bauhouse Group for East 58th Street between First Avenue and Sutton Place. That tower would exploit the loopholes in the 1960s zoning designation, which still dictates construction in the extreme East 50s, and which sets no specific height limits on apartment buildings despite new construction technologies that allow for super-tall, skinny towers.

Community Board 6 also passed a resolution calling for height caps in the neighborhood, which was sent to the Department of City Planning for consideration on May 13, within 45 days of the news.



The height of the Bauhouse tower if built. From River Fifties Alliance web site.

As of Right: Build Anything You Want

BY BRUCE A. SILBERBLATT

Megatowers built on tiny property lots are rising around the city as angry New Yorkers press for changes in the zoning regulations that make them possible. Community organizations, including the TBA, and local politicians throughout the boroughs are actively working to stop the trend.

The issue goes back to 1961 when the city's Zoning Resolution was written. Its residential zoning regulations reflected construction technology used in apartment buildings at the time, that supported a height of only about 30 floors. The resolution has been amended many times, but retains loopholes and allowances, which, combined with newer building technology, enable today's developers to build far taller.

As of Right

The first issue that needs reform is the designation "As of Right." It means that the Department of Buildings can approve plans for a proposed building without any

other process or review. Even the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) – a standardized procedure whereby applications affecting the use of the city's land is publicly reviewed – does not apply. A plan deemed "As of Right" allows developers to skirt the time-consuming special permit review required if zoning changes are found to be necessary prior to construction.

Transfer of Air Rights

Transfer of air rights means that the owner of a lot can merge his lot with adjoining ones which, because their buildings are low-rise, have unused air rights above them. By combining lots, the owner can collect and transfer the unused air rights to build much taller. At 72 stories, Trump World Tower, opposite the UN on First Avenue, was the first to apply this practice in the extreme, rising to 72 stories at its completion in 2001.

Now, the practice has grown to include

super-slim condominium towers as high as 90 stories, offering one unit to a floor, at prices up to \$100 million – a magnet for continued on page 3



Newsworthy Notes

We Remember

Ruth Brody died on September 9, 2015 at the age of 93. She was loved, and is remembered, by her friends for her warmth, wit, kindness and love of animals large and small. Ruth won awards for her work on advertising campaigns, volunteered for the Peace Corps when she was in her 60s, and served as a Coast Guard officer during the Second World War. She traveled widely throughout the world and won many lifetime friends as she traveled through her long, and very full life. The TBA remembers her as a spirited neighbor whom we met at many of our events over the years. She will be missed.

Joseph J. (Jerry) Marks passed away December 30, 2015. He was a longtime and active member of the TBA. He volunteered at the Katharine Hepburn Garden in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, and later at Peter Detmold Park. Jerry was a dear friend and we will miss him.

FDNY Chiefs Fined for Accepting Super Bowl Tickets

Seven high-ranking firefighters assigned to Engine 8 Ladder 2, on East 53rd Street, were fined for accepting free tickets to the 2014 Super Bowl, violating a conflict of interest section of the City Charter.

One of them admitted to accepting and distributing 52 free Super Bowl tickets from an NFL executive and securing an intern-

17th Precinct Telephone Numbers

212-826- Extensions Main Number
Integrity Control Officer3229
Detective Squad3217
Anti-Crime Office3225
Auxiliary Coordinator3216
Community Affairs3228
Crime Prevention3224
Domestic Violence3210
Evidence & Property Control3230
Taxi Property (Lost & Found)3246
School Safety Offficers3207
Terrorism Hotline1-888-NYC-SAFE
Crime Stoppers 1-800-477-TIPS

ship at the football league for his child. Fines ranged from \$500 to \$3000.

(From a report by Noah Hurowitz, DNAinfo.com, January 14, 2016.)

UN Temporary Building Coming Down

With the \$2 billion renovation of the United Nation's headquarters complex now complete, the large temporary building constructed on the UN's North Lawn to house displaced employees during the work is being dismantled. Demolition began in No-

vember, and in May, the large sculptures that were removed from the lawn to make way for the temporary structure will be moved back into place, the lawn will be re-landscaped to its original



United Nations Building.

state, and some additional trees will be added around the UN complex.

Thank You, Newsletter Volunteers

Thank you, new and renewing members, for volunteering to work on the newsletter.

If we haven't spoken yet, I will be in touch with you very soon.

I especially thank our most recent volunteer, Bernie Dworkin, who generously wrote and took pictures for the excellent article about Madison Jewelers on Page 4.

Lee Frankel
Editor

Editorial Committee

Editor: Lee Frankel Layout: Hilary Black

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TBA Who's Who

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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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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

As of Right continued from page 1

wealthy foreigners seeking profits through privately-owned companies whose owner's names and financials are hidden from tax authorities and the public.

The same secrecy applies to the planning of the towers. As of Right precludes review by the public or any city agency other than, at the end, the DOB. As a result, the buildings appear without adequate notice, and both the public and city government are powerless to stop them, even when they are out of scale with the neighborhood, cast shadows on parks, playgrounds and schools, and raise the cost of living for neighboring residents. The towers are irrevocably altering the city's skyline; New York City should not be like Dubai, Taipei, or Shanghai.

What Should be Done

• The Department of Finance, which

- maintains the tax lot maps and modifies them for zoning lot mergers, should post any and all planned changes on its web site. This should be done before the architect even begins detailed planning, which would then be submitted to the DOB for approval.
- New Yorkers need to stay ahead of the information curve. Real estate web sites The Real Deal and YIMBY carry stories about future projects, often before the city's Department of Finance becomes involved. Approval by the DOB takes many months, but there is only a 45-day challenge period (for zoning regulations only) once the agency receives the actual drawings and posts them under "New Buildings" on its web site. It is important to learn what's happening well in advance of that. Demolitions begin months before final plans are submitted, so visit the DOB web site, select "My
- Block," and go to "Full Demolitions." There you can obtain the information you need early enough in the development process to mount a protest.
- Petition your representative to end secrecy. Congress is considering a law prohibiting the anonymity of individual buyers, at least in Manhattan and Miami.
- Amend the city's Zoning Resolution. The City Planning Commission can initiate changes to the Zoning Resolution via the ULURP. It can also entertain changes advanced by interested parties. Currently lumbering through the CPC is a proposal called Transferable Development Rights. It is a review of the role of TDR mechanisms among the range of zoning and planning tools available in New York City. The process will include stakeholder engagement, examination of programs in other cities, and a comprehensive survey of existing programs in New York City.
- Enact the following zoning amendments:
 - 1. There shall be a 20% limit in the floor area increase over the base floor area without transferred air rights in areas zoned for commercial use. For residential and industrial areas, the limit shall be 15%.
 - 2. In residential areas, no new building shall be taller than its neighbors within its block and the next neighboring blocks.
 - 3. If a new building casts a shadow on any park, playground, school, or pubic amenity, it shall undergo the ULURP to correct or mitigate the issue.
 - 4. If a new building adversely affects the skyline, such as by blocking out a view of the Chrysler Building, it shall undergo the ULURP to correct or mitigate the issue.

Finally, eliminate As of Right immediately. The public, community groups, Community Boards, city officials and organizations like the Municipal Arts Society have been locked out of zoning transfers. There should be public review at all development stages: lot assembly, planning and design, and even financing.

The Turtle Bay Association Position Statement on Air Rights November 2, 2015

The Turtle Bay Association (TBA), well known and respected for its long-standing dedication to the stability and livability of its community and surrounding neighborhoods, wishes to go on record in opposition to the disturbing introduction of proposals that would loosen the regulation currently applied to the transfer of development air rights.

The Turtle Bay Association objects to the fact that the deal to "save" Stuyvesant Town includes the potential for the transfer of 10 million feet of air rights to development in any part of the City.

The Turtle Bay Association regrets that the Steering Committee for the proposed East Midtown Rezoning recommends that air rights transfers be increased with no limit should those air rights be derived from landmarked buildings. The TBA also opposes the Steering Committee suggestion that the east side of Third Avenue between 48th and 55th Streets be absorbed into the East Midtown rezoning district.

The Turtle Bay Association believes that rather than threatening our city's center and leaving its residents at the mercy of changing administrations and the real estate industry, the City should unreservedly strengthen the current regulations of the transfer of air rights

Bruce Silberblatt
Vice President for Land Use & Zoning
The Turtle Bay Association

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Spotlight on Local Business By Bernard Dworkin

Madison Jewelers

805 Third Avenue (49/50) 212-319-8899

Manager: Kevin Naiker

kevinnaiker@madisonjewelersnyc.com 25% discount with TBA membership card

Fun Shopping at Madison Jewelers

According to Kevin Naiker, South Africaborn owner and manager of Madison Jewelers, shopping for jewelry should be fun.



Manager Kevin Naiker.

"We see to it that you enjoy shopping with us. Just walk in and ask to try on a watch," he says with a big smile.

Although the store carries

jewelry, middle-to-high-end watches make up 75% of its inventory. Kevin, and employees Gila and Cynthia, cater to your



The shiny, modern storefront reflects what lies within.

preferences. There's never any pressure, and Kevin prides himself on that. "Stay as long as you like and return as often as you like, because our friendly and personal service is what sells our merchandise."

Here's a glimpse of how a visit to Madison Jewelers might go. You walk in and ask to try on a watch or piece of jewelry. The salesperson dons a jeweler's glove, picks up the piece, polishes it, and opens and closes the clasp. You put the piece on and then are guided to a mirror for a look.

"I like it. How much is it?" Not all pieces have price tags, and that reflects an openness to negotiation. You can feel free to suggest a price you think is fair. It helps if you first check the manufacturer's suggested retail price, easily found on its web site. Offer a price below that, and negotiations begin.

Kevin assured us that advances in

time-keeping technology have had little effect on his sales, because high-end watch makers have already begun supplying the "smart" watches many shoppers want. He added that buyers, particularly men, love timepieces. "It's like collecting luxury cars: they admire the beauty, precision and technology of fine timepieces."

The two-year-old business is doing well. The store, brightly lit and fronted in shining glass, has high definition videos supplied by watch manufacturers flashing from its walls. A personally autographed photo of Art Shamsky is prominently displayed on the wall. Shamsky, New York Mets outfielder from 1968 to 1971, is a valued Madison Jewelers customer. Despite its name, the Madison Jewelers in Turtle Bay is only distantly related to its cousin on Madison Avenue of the same name.

The store is nearby many good Turtle Bay restaurants. You can celebrate your newly-acquired treasure with a nice meal after your visit to Madison Jewelers.

Generous Neighbors Meet at Christmas Toy Drive

Many TBA members gathered at Parnell's Pub in December for excellent food and drink and exuberant conversation. They brought with them a profusion of toys and other gifts for donation to the families served by The Single Parent Resource Center, Inc. We thank our members for their generosity.



We are especially grateful to our neighbors who live at Beekman Court, 349 East 49th Street. This was the 10th year in which the building participated as a whole in collecting and donating items for our Toy Drive. We hope other buildings in Turtle Bay will consider doing the same when the 2016 holiday season comes around.



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A Look at the Proposal for Affordable Housing in a Sample Brooklyn Neighborhood

The Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) proposal is part of Housing New York, Mayor de Blasio's plan for creating and preserving 200,000 affordable homes for low- and middle-income residents, including those who make up the city's workforce. The Department of City Planning describes the MIH as "a proposal to require developers to provide permanently affordable housing for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers in communities where rezonings will allow substantial room for new growth."

Originally announced in September 2015, the proposal, with some text amendments, was approved by the City Planning Commission with 9 in favor, 3 opposed, and 1 abstention, on February 3. As the plan makes its way through the public review process it has become clear that many residents and community groups, as well as Community Boards and elected officials, object to the MIH as approved.

In December 2015, Comptroller Scott M. Stringer's office released "Affordability in Every Neighborhood." The report ana-



Scott Stringer.

lyzed the capacity of the proposed MIH to create more affordable housing, in the East New York area of Brooklyn, by building a mix of affordable and market-rate apartments in that neighbor-

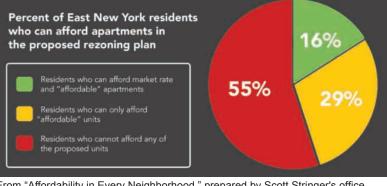
hood. The analysis found that "the 'affordable' apartments created by the plan would actually be too expensive for 55 percent of current neighborhood residents."

The report also "revealed that the 2,865 new, market-rate units called for in the plan would be beyond the reach of 84 percent of those living in East New York. But most important, the analysis found that the introduction of so many market-rate apartments would change the real estate dynamic in the neighborhood. It would lead to higher rental costs, and might displace the nearly 50,000 East New York residents who live in affordably-priced, unregulated and unprotected apartments."

Stringer has urged officials to abandon a "onesize-fits-all" approach to rezoning, and suggested the city work with each community individually to focus

on its distinctive needs to include: using neighborhood-specific income levels to determine affordability, creating new rules to protect residents from displacement, and constructing more apartments that are actually affordable.

In a statement emailed in December, Stringer stated, "New York City is facing a



From "Affordability in Every Neighborhood," prepared by Scott Stringer's office.

crisis when it comes to affordable housing, and our City needs to do whatever it can to preserve - and expand - this shrinking resource. We must continue to be a City that grows, but also one that allows residents to remain in their neighborhoods, and in homes they can afford." The TBA supports Comptroller Stringer's viewpoint.

Turtle Bay Association Statement Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Zoning For Quality and Affordability Delivered at the Manhattan Borough President's Hearing November 16, 2015

Two city-wide proposals are being hurried through the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP). We are at the end of a local community board review in which all 59 community boards have evaluated highly complex changes to hundreds of pages of the city's Zoning Resolution. The vast majority of boards have rejected both zoning revisions.

We at the Turtle Bay Association recognize the validity of the first proposal, Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, but take strong exception to the earnings levels set by the City for eligibility. At a stormy meeting at a Bronx community board Jim Fairbanks, a member of Community Action for Apartments (CASA), demanded "I'm going to ask that you vote 'No,' because this is not an affordable plan. We want affordability; this is not affordable for the area median income of \$25,000!"

It is a point well taken. We ask that the Department of City Planning evaluate the need and set entry levels which are equitable and appropriate. We cannot support the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing proposal in its present form.

We at the Turtle Bay Association also do NOT accept the proposition that the zoning measures in the second proposal are even necessary or equitable. Taller buildings are not a remedy that has been proven. The complicated measure lifts building heights by 10% to 20% benefiting the real estate industry and will do great harm to the unique diversity that identifies New York's neighborhoods. In a retrograde move it even voids part of the ban on sliver buildings and would allow certain rear yard construction.

We support the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation and urge that the City council reject the Zoning for Quality and Affordability proposals in their entirety.

Bruce A. Silberblatt Turtle Bay Association Vice President Zoning and Land Use Chairman.

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Love Thy Neighborhood Valentine's Day Party

The 32nd Annual Love Thy Neighborhood Party was such a success, and people had such a good time, that many stayed late after the delightful dinner to go on talking and imbibing at Piccolo Fiore, on East 44th Street.

It was District 4 Council Member Dan Garodnick's 11th consecutive TBA Valentine's Day party, and he spoke of how important we are to his work as a local elected representative.

Manhattan Borough President Gail Brewer dropped in and expressed her support for the TBA's activities, such as the community supermarket protest we recently led on behalf of Turtle Bay.

We thank 17th Precinct Deputy Inspector Clint McPherson and

(I. to r.) Dep. Insp. Clint McPherson, Borough Pres. Gayle Brewer, Det. Jeff Arlotta, TBA Pres. Bill Curtis. eral much-appreciated raffle gifts, including NYPD ball caps and T-shirts. We are also grateful to Salon Amici, our longtime and very generous TBA business member, who donated free hair styling services to some very lucky raffle winners.

Piccolo Fiore did a wonderful job on the food and the service, which was very friendly and helpful. It was a wonderful chance for to us connect with neighbors and friends, share a meal, and just relax.

We appreciate the efforts of Dolores Marsh, TBA Vice President, who made arrangements with the restaurant and JoAnn Winick, of the Special Events Committee, whose table decorations were so enjoyed, that many people took them home.



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Art & Culture in Turtle Bay

Turtle Bay Music School

244 East 52nd Street 212-753-8811 tbms.org

Free Artist Series Fridays, 7 - 9 pm

Free and open to the public; general seating on first-come, first-served basis; Meet-The-Artist wine reception follows.

March 11

Pablo Mayor - Folklore Urbano. Mayor brings his Folklore Urbano quintet to TBMS for a lively evening of contemporary Colombian jazz.

April 1

Zak Sandler, composer. Sandler will present a staged reading of his new musical, an adaptation of Jeanne DuPrau's post-apocalyptic science fiction novel "City of Ember."

April 8

Matthew Graybil, piano. Graybil presents an eclectic program of works for solo piano.

May 6

Isabel Fairbanks, cello. Fairbanks presents a program of Romantic piano quintets, featuring works by Brahms and Dvorak.

May 13

Dina Pruzhansky, piano. Pruzhansky and friends perform selections from her original vocal compositions, spanning genres from opera to art song to musical theatre.

June 3

Bonita Jackson, actress. Jackson returns with a one-woman show combining elements of theatre, stepping, music, spoken word and mime.

St. Bart's

325 Park Avenue at 51st Purchase tickets at http://mmpaf.org or box office, 212-378-0248.

Great Music

Sunday, March 13, 2:30 - 4 pm

Apple Hill String Quartet. The widely praised quartet performs works by Henry Purcell, Philip Glass, and Pavel Haas in the beautiful acoustics of the chapel. Players: Elise Kruder, Colleen Jennings, violin; Mike Kelley, viola; Rupert Thompson, cello. \$25 general admission; \$15 students/seniors.

Monday, April 25, 7:30 pm,

Andy Akiho & The Sebastians, and The Amphion String Quartet This double bill juxtaposes music by young composer Andy Akiho with a set of Baroque masterpieces performed by the Sebastians. The counterpoint of Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 is echoed by the keen sense of line in Akiho's masterful LIgNEouS for string quartet and marimba, and other works. \$35 general admission; \$15 students/seniors.

Japan Society

333 East 47th Street 212-832-1155 japansociety.org

Box Office Hours: Mon. - Fri., 11 am - 6 pm, weekends during exhibitions, 11 am - 5 pm. Gallery Hours: Tues. - Thurs., 11 am - 6 pm, Fri., 11 am - 9 pm, Sat. and Sun., 11 am - 5 pm. Closed on Mondays and major holidays. Gallery Admission: \$12; students and seniors \$10; members and children under 16 free. Free to all on Fri. nights, 6 pm - 9 pm.

Spring Exhibition

March 11 - June 12, 2016

In the Wake: Japanese Photographers Respond to 3/11. The catastrophic earthquake and tsunami that struck northeast Japan on March 11, 2011 and triggered an ongoing nuclear crisis has produced a shift in contemporary Japanese culture. This exhibition reveals a stunning range of photographic responses to the disaster as Japan continues to rebuild. With more than 90 photographic works by 17 of Japan's leading visionaries, viewers can experience the power and poetry of art transcending unspeakable tragedy. The exhibition was organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



Film

Friday, April 1, 7 pm

Stray Dog (Nora Inu). Akira Kurosawa's classic police procedural starring a luminous Toshiro Mifune screens in honor of what

would have been the superstar actor's 96th birthday. On a sweltering summer day, a rookie detective named Murakami (Mifune) has his pistol stolen on a crowded city bus and, aided by section chief (Takashi Shimura), scours downtown Tokyo for clues. As they get close to their goal, however, the distinction between Murakami and the criminal who stole it starts to become less and less clear. Stray Dog plunges deep into the anxiety and moral ambiguity of immediate postwar Japan with Kurosawa's masterful visual flair. 1949, 122 min., 35mm, b&w, in Japanese with English subtitles.

St. Peter's Church

619 Lexington Avenue/54th Street saintpeters.org

Mid-Day Jazz Wednesdays, 1 pm In the Sanctuary

These popular concerts feature well-regarded artists, with programming overseen by jazz pianist Ronny Whyte.

International Women in Jazz First Monday of every month

Supports women jazz artists and related professionals and seeks to foster a greater awareness of the diverse contributions women make to jazz worldwide. Women,

men, jazz professionals students and enthusiasts are welcome to take part



in programming. Call for information.

Did you ever dine at Lutêce, on 50th Street just west of Second Avenue?

The building that housed it is being demolished, and we'd like to feature some history on this great New York City restaurant of the past.

Please mail or email your recollections to the TBA office.

224 East 47th Street New York, NY 10017 office@turtlebay-nyc.org

Art in the Park

Four new sculptures are on view in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, at 47th Street and Second Avenue.

"Babel," "Butterfly," "Dialogue" and "Communication" are the work of Brazilian artist Mazeredo who translates the sounds she hears in Brazil into the vibrant colors and shapes that make up her sculptures. One of her most ubiquitous shapes is the abstracted mouth form. For example, Babel depicts mouths arguing as they ascend the tower to discuss the harmony of human dialogue in solving differences. The exhibition is presented by the Friends of Dag Hammarskjold and will be there through April 30.



Sculptures in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza by Brazilian Artist Mazeredo.

Time for Spring Cleaning

It's time for spring cleaning, and you can do it without wasting any oldies but goodies. Your contribution to the GrowNYC program will be tax deductible.

Every Wednesday, the Greenmarket at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza (47th and Second) accepts:

- Clean and dry clothing
- Paired shoes
- Linens

- Handbags
- Belts
- · Other reusable textiles

It does NOT accept: fabric rolls or scraps of any size, rugs, carpeting, pillows, comforters or luggage.

Textiles are collected by Wearable Collections and taken to a facility where they are sorted into different grades, with an effort to recover as much usable clothing as possible for distribution to second-hand markets. Material that is not suitable for reuse goes to recycling markets for use as wiping rags or is shredded for low grade fiber products such as insulation.



TBA MEMBERSHIP COUPON Yes, I want to join the Turtle Bay Association to help support our community's quality of life. **Annual Membership Dues** ☐ Senior \$15 ☐ Individual \$25 ☐ Family \$30 ☐ Business \$40 ■ Benefactor \$100 ☐ Pacesetter \$250 Name Address City/State/Zip_____ Home Phone Work Phone ☐ 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

A Contemporary History of Turtle Bay Arcadia Publishing • 160 pages; 50 photos \$15.00

ne	
ress	

Nar

City/State/Zip_____

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.

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