



TURTLE BAY NEWS

From the Turtle Bay Association, neighborhood association for
Manhattan's Turtle Bay, East Midtown, home of the United Nations.

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*Season's
Greetings
from the
Turtle Bay
Association*



Stephen Sondheim, A Neighbor and Friend



By Pam Hanlon

The Turtle Bay Association mourns the passing of composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim, a resident and ardent supporter of the neighborhood of Turtle Bay for more than 60 years.

Sondheim moved to Turtle Bay in mid-1960, to a townhouse on East 49th Street in the complex of houses called Turtle Bay Gardens. He still owned the house at the time of his death, and through all the years, remained a loyal TBA member and donor to the Turtle Bay Tree Fund, a group that provides

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Stephen Sondheim continued

plantings in area tree beds.

Sondheim's list of musical credits includes eight Tony Awards, eight Grammy Awards, an Academy Award, a Pulitzer Prize, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Still, despite all his success, he remained a loyal neighbor. In a 2008 interview for the book *Manhattan's Turtle Bay*, Sondheim said, "I've always loved our neighborhood. It's got personality and people who really care about it."

In that interview, Sondheim talked about first moving to Turtle Bay. He explained that when he considered buying his five-story townhouse, at the age of 30, he was still an aspiring young composer, and not yet financially secure. But neighbors in the Upper East Side apartment building where he rented were complaining about his loud piano music. So he thought he needed a house. "After a friend gave me an economics lesson in real estate," he said, "I realized that with the royalties from the recent success of *Gypsy* (a Broadway hit for which Sondheim wrote the lyrics), I could afford a down payment. And then I rented out the top three floors of the townhouse to help me pay the mortgage."

By 1973, Sondheim no longer needed to rent out the upper floors of his house. By then, his credits included *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Anyone Can Whistle*, *Company*, and *Follies*, and he had received his first two Tony Awards. He determined he was now financially secure enough to live in the entire five-story house, without renters.

Sondheim said his initial interest in the area was the fact that Turtle Bay, with its Midtown location, was a convenient "commute" to the Broadway theatre district. And for years, he bicycled from his townhouse to Broadway. A friend, actor Anthony Perkins, had given him his bicycle as a present. "I came home one Christmas Eve to find a bike outside my house on 49th Street, all wrapped up with a big red ribbon," he recalled.

Many longtime neighbors remember Sondheim on his bike, which he said he only stopped riding in the mid-1970s when friends convinced him that worsening midtown traffic posed too great a risk.

In 2007, the 50th anniversary year of the Turtle Bay Association, he served as honorary chairman of the Turtle Bay Association's membership drive. And he was a guest of honor at the TBA's 50th anniversary gathering at the Japan Society, where members

remember him generously sharing neighborhood stories over cocktails and hors d'oeuvres.

"We will always remember Stephen for his extraordinary gift to us of music and song, but also for his many contributions to our neighborhood," said Bill Curtis, head of the Turtle Bay Tree Fund and president of the TBA for some 50 years.

Current TBA president Dolores Marsh said, "We were honored to have Stephen Sondheim as our neighbor. His support of our area never wavered, and we will be forever grateful for that."

Since the Covid pandemic, Sondheim had been spending most of his time at his home in Roxbury, Connecticut. But he was in Manhattan occasionally, and as recently as November 14 and 15, 2021, he was in the City to attend the opening night of "Assassins" and a preview of "Company." He died at his Roxbury home on November 26.

Sondheim will be remembered by many throughout the world, but for Turtle Bay residents, he will always have a special place in our hearts.

Remembering Stephen Sondheim

The Board of Directors of the Turtle Bay Tree Fund is saddened by the loss of composer and lyricist Steven Sondheim, one of the theater's greatest geniuses, and our longtime friend and neighbor in the Manhattan neighborhood of Turtle Bay. He was called one of the most important figures in 20th century American Musical Theater, though he said "All I want to do is tell stories, have people laugh and cry, and have a good time." Modest intentions aside, we rise to celebrate Stephen's life work in music and song that has come to be shared around the world.

Then too, Stephen's influence can be seen on a smaller scale in the neighborhood of Turtle Bay. As a resident, he was a longtime supporter, and founding member, of the Turtle Bay Tree Fund, a donor supported group that organizes and plants flowers in close to 300 tree beds throughout the Turtle Bay community every year. We will always remember Stephen for his extraordinary gift to us of music and song — and for all of those flowers.

Bill Curtis
President
Turtle Bay Tree Fund

Professionals Group Event

The TBA Professionals Group hosted its first event since 2019 on December 15th at Madam Mikette's, a TBA business member, located on Second Avenue between 52nd and 53rd.



Around 15 people comprised of existing members and prospects attended the cash bar get-together that was held from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm this past Wednesday. Appetizers, compliments of TBA, and happy hour specials were enjoyed after vaccination cards and IDs were checked at the front door. Attendees enthusiastically networked and toasted to the holiday season, which was a very welcome sight after the past, challenging 20 months.

We are happy to report that both residents and fans of the Turtle Bay neighborhood are interested in getting involved with TBA and are eager for more social events in the near future.



Becky Flig and Candi Obrentz will collaborate to plan the next Professionals Group gathering for early 2022.



ANNUAL HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE

Our annual Holiday Toy Drive scheduled for December 5, 2021 at Parnell's Restaurant had to be cancelled due to Covid. All who wished to donate gifts were asked to drop off their unwrapped gifts at Parnell's between 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM. Examples of gifts needed for young children were: dolls, games, footballs, and stuffed animals. Also needed were miscellaneous items for teens and adults: warm hats, gloves and scarves also

Several TBA members were present to accept the toys/gifts, thank the recipients for their donations and wait for Single Parents Resource Center come by and take away the gifts.

Those who were unable to drop off a gift and wished to make a contribution, were asked to make checks payable to one of these tax-deductible organizations: Single Parent Resource Center, Vanderbilt YMCA Scholarship Fund, God's Love We Deliver.

Happily, our modified version was a great success. A heartfelt thank you to all who participated.

TREE LIGHTING

Santa, lights, carolers, cookies, hot chocolate and most of all, big smiles! This was the festive holiday scene at DAG HAMMARSKJOLD PLAZA, 47th Street & 2nd Avenue on Thursday night, December 16, 2021. The tree lighting event featuring the wonderful MANHATTAN HOLIDAY CAROLERS, serenading throughout the evening with holiday favorites.

Lights were shined with free LED safe candles. Sweet treats were enjoyed. Children sang and danced with Santa. Pets came out to join the festivities. A joyous time was had by all.

The event was organized by Friends of DAG HAMMARSKJOLD PARK. A special thanks goes to the TURTLE BAY ASSOCIATION for sponsoring this community event and donating the lighted tree in the entrance dome.



SAVE THE DATE!

Love Thy Neighborhood Valentine Party



Save the date for the annual LOVE THY NEIGHBORHOOD VALENTINE PARTY.
Monday, February 7, 2022 at COPINETTE RESTURANT, 891 First Avenue, 6:00PM to 9:00PM.

Watch for your invitation!

WELCOME NEW TBA BUSINESS MEMBERS

Please mention when doing business with our Business Members that you are a Turtle Bay Association member. This way our business member will know our Association is supporting their business.

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ARMARIO is a family owned and operated full service dry cleaner, with more than 20 years of experience in the garment care industry. Their well trained staff can assist with any matters pertaining to your garment care needs, and their in-house tailors are always ready to help. They offer a wide array of services including: eco-friendly dry cleaning, wet cleaning, shirt laundry, alteration, repairs, wash and fold, leather, suede, fur, wedding, bridal, fine linens, and bedding care. They offer complimentary pick-up and delivery service throughout Manhattan, and stand behind their work, therefore satisfaction is always guaranteed

Stop by the Manhattan location: 865 United Nations Plaza (1st Avenue at 49th Street) or schedule a complimentary pick-up by calling 917-676-7962.





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