

FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN

APRIL 2010

The Fort Greene Association is devoted to historic preservation, neighborhood and park enhancement, as well as cultural, economic, and housing advancement. To find out more, become a member, or to volunteer, visit our website www.HistoricFortGreene.org

The Greene Hill Food Co-op: coming our way - soon!

by DK Holland

Over two years ago Fort Greeners along with people from Clinton Hill and the other surrounding areas mobilized in response to the general lack of affordable quality food options in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill putting into motion the plans for a new 100% working, member-owned food coop for the entire neighborhood.

Why? Partly because we have limited access to affordable quality food; also because as a neighborhood we are able to work together so well.

By being working owners, our prices can be economical. By having members handle the purchasing, we can get the best quality at the best price and control whom we support through our purchases. Together, we will build a diverse and inclusive community around this primal issue, Food.

Guiding principles

At a General Meeting in the summer of 2008 the following Guiding Principles were voted on by the Greene Hill Food Co-op members present.

The Co-op strives to offer locally and organically grown and otherwise quality, healthful, delicious and environmentally and socially friendly foods at low costs to its members.

The Co-op is member-owned and operated and the work we all share contributes to achieving our goals. In respecting the integrity of each person in the spirit of the cooperative, the Co-op embraces the diversity of our community, and works to ensure people from all socio-economic backgrounds have access.

The Co-op seeks to develop a strong community institution by being a responsible and ethical entity, using not-for-profit purchasing and selling practices, and maximizing the positive impact through its presence."

Where will the Co-op be?

Quite frankly it's a chicken and egg thing. We need members to join up; invest in the Co-op in order to get grants so that we can reach the number we consider our 'nut'. Then and only then will we seriously talk to about a specific location. We get approached all the time with interest from landlords and local organizations (FAB, MARP, PACC have all been helpful) and we've looked at a number of spaces. We've worked for over two years to develop a very solid business model and supportive, informed membership.



Our members

For the past two plus years, anyone attending a General Meeting and/or working on one of our six committees has been considered a voting member. Once we start to take investments (which will be escrowed) only those invested members will have voting privileges. At any rate, all decisions are made at General Meetings, which are open to the public.

We have a level playing field: One member, one vote. All members who are able to, work on the Co-op in some capacity. We have accommodations for those who are too disabled to work and/or have financial hardships.

Our membership drive is scheduled to start soon. If you want updates, please go to our website greenehill-foodcoop.com and sign up for the email newsletter or call and leave a message on our phone number 718-208-4778 and we'll get back to you.

DK Holland is a member of Fort Greene Association, has lived here since 1983, is co-founder of The Hill (the Journal of Fort Greene, Clinton Hill and Wallabout) and the Greene Hill Food Co-op on which she is co-chair of the Steering Committee.

Housesitters Wanted

The Bargain of a Lifetime!

Two years ago well over 160 neighbors enjoyed the Fort Greene House Tour for only \$10.00, a 50% discount from the regular price by generously volunteering to house sit.

Now it's your turn to volunteer, once again or for the first time. It's so easy. Just e-mail or telephone Fred Lasker, the Chair of the Sitters Committee at 718-875-1856 or fred@HistoricFortGreene.org as soon as possible.

And in recognition, join us at our fun volunteer's party complete with music, dinner, beverages and mingling with all the other House Tour workers, Sponsors, and Home Owners! You will never forget this wonderful opportunity to revel with your fellow community enthusiasts!



Tree Giveaway - April 17-18, 2010 at Putnam Triangle in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn

See Inside →

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NEXT FGA MEETING:

Monday, April 19, 7:30 pm-
Light Refreshments at 7pm.

TOPIC: Hungry? Feeding Fort Greene.

Fort Greene is one of the most diverse neighborhoods in New York City except when it comes to getting fresh affordable food. Join the discussion as we discover how to fill this most basic need in our Neighborhood. Got a recipe favorite? Enter our recipe contest online at www.HistoricFortGreene.org.

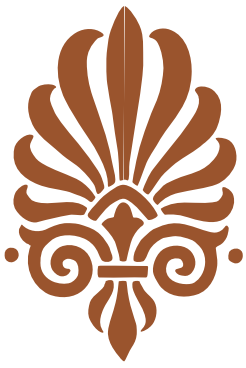
Plus all the goings on in Fort Greene and don't forget to come meet your neighbors at 7pm.

LOCATION:

The Town Hall of Fort Greene - LAPC, 85 S. Oxford Street (corner of S. Oxford & Lafayette Ave.)

Meeting Room, entrance on South Oxford Street

All are welcome to attend, homeowners & renters alike.



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All are welcome to attend, homeowners & renters alike.

Attend our next Neighborhood meeting on April 19, 2010 ("Hungry? Feeding Fort Greene") and **enter our Recipe Contest**. Share your food know-how at our Neighborhood Mixer at 7PM and bring in a meal to feed a family of four for under \$10. **Winners will walk away with valuable prizes.** More information at HistoricFortGreene.org.

Reach hundreds of Fort Greene households in the mail, via email & on the web by underwriting the FGA Newsletter. Call for details: 347-224-6487.

Design by Abby Weissman

Free Trees – For You!

Are you planning your spring garden? Do you have an open spot for a tree? Plant a tree that will grow as your kid grows. Commemorate a loved one. Come to the Tree Giveaway on April 17th-18th and walk away with a FREE TREE! Or stay to help give trees away.

Green Fort Greene & Clinton Hill and FAB Alliance in partnership with MillionTreesNYC and the New York Restoration Project are giving away 200 FREE TREES on April 17-18th from 10am-3pm. Bring your friends and family to Putnam Triangle in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn (Fulton St and Grand Ave) and leave with a tree to plant at home, at your business, at church, at school (as long as it's private property).

All trees will be first-come, first-served. All you need is a place to plant and access to water. We will give you advice and even lend you a shovel. Free trees will be available to individuals, families and community groups for planting on private property, and not in containers or on rooftops. Trees will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis until supplies run out. We expect to have limited quantities of the following species: Eastern Redbud, Dogwood, Cherry, Oak and Sweet Gum.

Trees are renewable resources that benefit the entire community. They reduce air pollution, beautify the neighborhood, slow traffic and teach important environmental values.

Not sure what type of tree you want? Horticulture specialists will be on hand to answer questions and provide species selection recommendations. Simple tree planting and care instructions come with your tree.

Do you want to help out? Volunteers are needed to give out trees, transport trees, help neighbors plant their free trees, publicize the event in surrounding neighborhoods and answer questions about tree planting. To volunteer, please contact Marilyn Shaw at volunteer@greenfgcb.org. For more info, please contact Jed Marcus at tree@greenfgcb.com.

Presented by Green Fort Greene & Clinton Hill and FAB Alliance in partnership with New York Restoration Project and MillionTreesNYC and through the generous support of Bloomberg Philanthropies and David Rockefeller

About MillionTreesNYC: Led by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and New York Restoration Project (NYRP), MillionTreesNYC is a citywide, public-private initiative that recognizes the

benefits trees provide New York City's residents, neighborhoods and environment, through an ambitious goal: to plant and care for one million new trees across the City's five boroughs by 2017.

Green Fort Greene & Clinton Hill is a project of the Fort Greene Association.



Tree Giveaway – April 17-18, 2010 at Putnam Triangle in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn



Chair's Notes by Paul Palazzo

Let's face it, I love food. Take one look at me and you'll know that I love food. But the relationship between healthy fresh affordable food choices and Fort Greene hasn't always been a good one. When I first came to the Neighborhood, 26 years ago, you could count the number of local restaurants on one hand and I recall one Martin Luther King Day where residents staged a protest outside a local supermarket (the only one in the Neighborhood) demanding better quality meat and vegetables.

Looking down our commercial avenues today you can hardly recall the days of the solitary, frozen in time, *Cino's Italian restaurant*. Now, there are a myriad of food choices. Or is it a mirage? I am certainly thankful for the current day variety along our commercial strips for my occasional

treat of a restaurant meal but what about day to day? What about fresh? What about affordable? Here is where Fort Greene seems to be frozen in time.

But with persistence and perseverance our Neighborhood's relationship with food is changing. After many years of effort we have the Saturday Farmers Market bringing fresh seasonal produce to the Neighborhood. Community Supported Agriculture [CSA] groups work with farmers to connect the Neighborhood to local sustainable food.

Local merchants like *Fresh Garden*, *Greene Grape Provisions*, *Elly's* and even *Fresh Direct* offer more choice. And now residents of the Neighborhood, undoubtedly some who participated in those early protests, have mobilized to form Greene Hill Food Coop to offer an affordable

option to the Neighborhood.

Our food relationship in Fort Greene is certainly improving better but much work still needs to be done. Large sections of the Neighborhood still have no supermarket, no fresh fruit or vegetables, no healthy option. We must work to make this current day reality a faded memory and provide food equality for the entire Neighborhood. Persistence and perseverance are qualities that I would use to best describe Fort Greene, we will make a change.

Our next Neighborhood Meeting will be a discussion of the problem and the solutions surrounding "Food in Fort Greene." So if you are as "Hungry" as I, come join us this April 19th. As always we'll be seeing you soon and don't forget to keep in touch.

- Paul Palazzo, FGA Chair

Safer, More Walk-able Streets

The Downtown Brooklyn Traffic Calming Project and You!

By Mary Priebe

The FGA has had lots of e-mail regarding changes being made to Fort Greene's streets. The changes on DeKalb Avenue in particular are hard to miss.

In transportation speak, a series of neckdowns and bus bulbs have recently been created along DeKalb, Fulton and Myrtle Avenues, all to enhance the safety for traffic and pedestrians in Fort Greene. This part of project is still in progress, as Phase One.

The work is all part of the Downtown Brooklyn Traffic Calming Project, created to work toward safer, more walk-able streets. The effort covers not just Fort Greene, but all of the Downtown Brooklyn neighborhoods.

To explain, 'Neckdowns' are the extra wide sidewalks at intersections. They enhance the safety of pedestrians. Crossing distances are shortened, waiting areas with a clear line of sight for oncoming traffic are provided and vehicles need to slow to make the narrower turn.

Lafayette Avenue added neckdowns at the worst intersections several years ago as part of a pilot project. They were successful enough that they are currently being added along DeKalb, Fulton and Myrtle Avenues as part of Phase One.

'Bus bulbs' are the sidewalk extensions that bring waiting customers out to the bus lane. The bus bulbs will not provide shelter on a rainy day, but do allow bus drivers to pull to the curb without leaving the travel lane. Studies have shown them to be effective, as bus operators often do not pull out of traffic. The increased sidewalk space acts as an extra waiting area for passengers as well as giving a better line of sight of bus approach. Passengers are not walking out into the traffic lanes to watch for approaching buses.

Another recent addition to the neighborhood, and part of the Traffic Calming Project, are the speed humps on Clermont Avenue between DeKalb and Willoughby, in front of PS 20. This wide two way block often became a speedway, especially dangerous for the students at PS 20.

According to Chris Hones at DOT, speed humps will be multiplying soon, as approval has just come through for additional speed humps along Adelphi and Clermont. Locations in front of PS 46, Adelphi between Park and Myrtle, PS 20, Adelphi between Willoughby and DeKalb and IS 131, Adelphi between DeKalb and Lafayette will all be getting speed humps within the year.

Other good work included by the project includes the new widened sidewalks and plantings at the Seven Corners intersection of Fulton, South Oxford and Greene Avenues. We look forward to spring, and the final paving of the street at that intersection to complete the project.

There is a Phase Two to the project which will start Fall 2010. In Fort Greene there will be additional bus bulbs, in appropriate paving materials with granite curbs, installed along Lafayette Ave. An added bonus will be increased space for pedestrians on the south side of Lafayette, where sidewalks are particularly narrow.

BAM'S Epochal History in Fort Greene to Be Made Public in a Proud Archive

By Howard Pitsch

In March 2010 the Brooklyn Academy of Music revealed that its treasury of cherished documents will become open to public viewing by early 2011 in a 3,800 square foot, ground-floor space of the Forté Apartment building at 230 Ashland Place, corner of Fulton Street.

In the announcement, Ms. Karen Brooks Hopkins, president of BAM, states that through a generous gift from BAM board member Charles J. Hamm, a former CEO of Brooklyn's Independence Community Bank, the BAM Hamm Archive Center will portray the significant role of BAM programming from before the Civil War to the illustrious presentations in Fort Greene today. The original Academy from 1853 was located on Montague Street in Brooklyn Heights until consumed by fire in 1903, after which the present Italian Renaissance opera house opened in 1908.

For a sneak preview of some of the wonders from the BAM archives, make sure to buy the new *Images of America* book called *Fort Greene*, from Arcadia Publishing, due the end of April 2010. You will be able to see some of the playbills as well as photographs of notable luminaries such as Enrico Caruso, Ernestine Schumann-Heink, Sarah Bernhardt, Booker T. Washington, Winston Churchill, Paul Robeson and Rudolph Nureyev. Fort Greene will be priced at \$22 ordered in advance via HistoricFortGreene.org, and ready for pick-up the day of the 30th Fort Greene House Tour, Sunday on May 2, 2010.

Sampling of BAM luminaries

(clockwise from top left):

Isadora Duncan 1928;
Anna Pavlowa 1924;
Marian Anderson 1938;
Paul Robeson 1930;
Enrico Caruso 1908;
Sarah Bernhardt 1917.





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THE 30th FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION HOUSE TOUR

May 2, 2010, Noon to 5pm - Rain or Shine

In addition to gaining access into the splendid Victorian interiors of Fort Greene you will also get a glimpse into the backstage life of this great neighborhood. Fort Greene has become the City's hot new Arts Scene and will swing open its doors with exclusive Artists Showings and Backstage Tours.

The Tour will also feature residents who have shops and design on a global scale right from the comfort of this all inclusive neighborhood. Join us in Fort Greene Brooklyn for this very special event.

Advance Tickets \$20*

Available online www.HistoricFortGreene.org

In Fort Greene (cash only)

BAM Box office 30 Lafayette Avenue

Yu Interiors 15 Greene Avenue

The Farmers Market Fort Greene Park (Saturdays)

Gnarly Vines 350 Myrtle Avenue

Brooklyn Flea Lafayette at Clermont Avenue (Saturdays)

Day of Tour tickets \$25*

In Fort Greene (cash only)

BAM Garden Fulton Street at Lafayette Avenue

Fort Greene Park DeKalb Avenue at Washington Park

For more info: www.HistoricFortGreene.org or call 718 875 1855.