

FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN SEPTEMBER 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

General Fowler Will Grace Newly Designed Gateway to Fort Greene

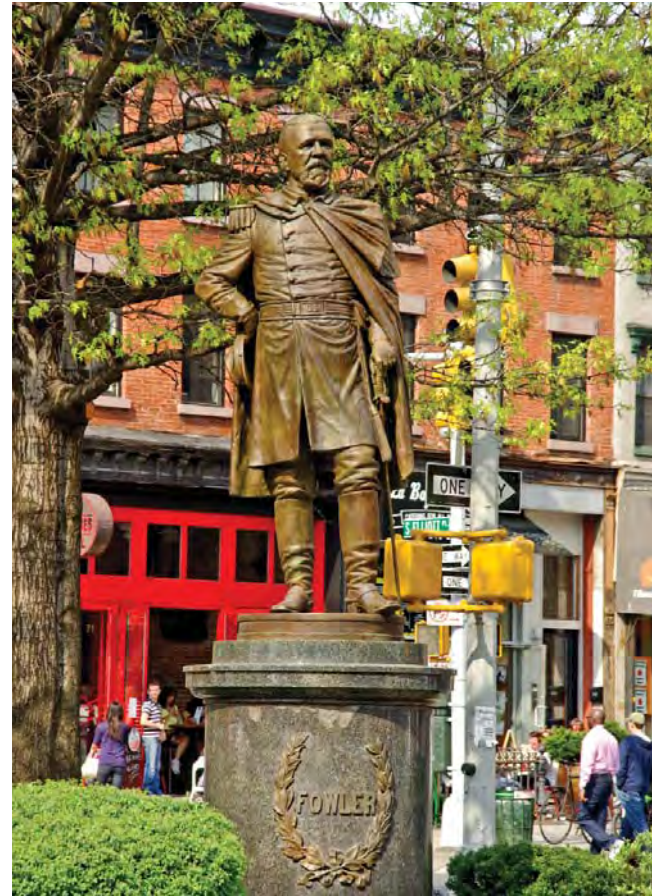
An enlarged Fowler Square, re-configured as a fitting gateway to Fort Greene, will provide a much needed green barrier and a vital public space. Several components are necessary: approval of Fulton Area Business Alliance (FAB) proposal to the NYC DOT Plaza Program for funding; creation of a design for the park with extensive community input; and the landmarking of mixed use buildings forming the South Elliott side of the triangle.

An appropriately redesigned triangle will also provide a fitting location for a statue of General Fowler, venerable member of the fighting 14th, beloved of his boys, the red-legged devils whose history is dear to the descendants and historians of the fighting 14th, originally stationed in Fort Greene Park under the then Colonel Fowler.

The completion of this project will bring to fruition a wish of Fort Greene residents stemming back to 1973 that Fort Greene should have an entrance that "gave the feeling it was a neighborhood people cared about," recalls an early resident. That concept has remained vital since the early efforts of the Fort Greene Triangle Parks committee right up through FGA and FAB efforts at this time.

Landmarking the buildings on South Elliott Place that form one side of the triangle is an important component to the successful creation of the Fort Greene Gateway. The low-rise identity of the area would be retained, tying the Fort Greene Historic District and the Bam Historic District together with Fowler Triangle as the knot. Fowler Square is formed by the triangular intersection of Fulton Street, Lafayette Avenue and South Elliott Place.

Readers who would like to send letters of support for the enhancement of Fowler square may send them to Councilmember Letitia James, 67 Hanson Place, Brooklyn NY 11217.



Chair's Notes by Paul Palazzo, FGA Chair

Ready. Set. Go!

If you're like me, Summer is all about laying the ground work for the Fall season. We've been doing the same at the FGA and we have a wonderful Fall season of news and events planned for Fort Greene.

The FGA welcomes three new energetic board members, each who bring a new vitality and focus to improving our daily lives in Fort Greene. Stay tuned to see the great things that Lillian, Marcos, and Siyon will bring to the Neighborhood.

We are also excited to tell you that our project to extend the boundaries of the Fort Greene Historic District is now before the Landmarks Preservation Commission for final review. Much work has gone into making this a reality and many thanks to Stephanie Levinsky for bringing this to fruition.

And finally we are so pleased with you our members who have been contacting the FGA giving us direction and input on how to build a better Fort Greene. Keep up the good work all.

The Summer is over and the FGA is ready for a great Fall.

As always we'll be seeing you soon and don't forget to keep in touch.

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Sam Johnson
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Reverend David Dyson

NEXT FGA MEETING:

Monday, Sept. 20, 2010
7:30 pm
Light refreshments
at 7.00 pm

TOPIC: The Street: Safety and Quality of Life in Today's Fort Greene

Fort Greene has experienced a significant increase in local automobile, bicycle and pedestrian traffic in recent years. Today intersections in Fort Greene can be busy day and night, with vehicles fighting for space with those on foot or in baby strollers. Ask questions and get answers from elected officials and NYC representatives on this urgent topic.

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

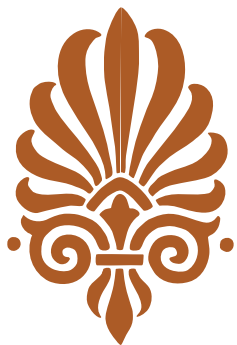
LOCATION:

The Town Hall of Fort Greene - LAPC,
85 S. Oxford St. (corner of S. Oxford & Lafayette Ave.)
Meeting Room, enter on S. Oxford St.

All are welcome to attend, homeowners & renters alike.



Map courtesy of Fulton Area Businesses (FAB).



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Fort Greene Teens Are Keeping it Fresh with Food

by Sam Lipschultz, Food Access Project Coordinator, Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project

"I don't want to teach people half of what I know, I want to teach them everything I know," said 15 year old Eddith Sanchez as she reflected on her personal goals for the Fort Greene FRESH Teens program.

Eddith is one of six teenagers from the neighborhood who, over 16 weeks, from July through October, is participating in the Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project's (MARP) new Fort Greene FRESH Teens program, funded in part by a Fort Greene Association grant. The FRESH Teens program is building a community of informed, active youth from the neighborhood by connecting them with the practices of growing, cooking, eating and shopping for fresh food. The youth will walk away as "community food educators" for their communities.

They will have the ability to make informed decisions about the food they eat, and the tools to educate other youth to do the same.

In addition to Eddith, who is 15 years old, lives in the Farragut Houses and enjoys bowling and cooking, the FRESH Teens include 14 year old Evelyn Fernandez, who is a resident of the Whitman Houses and loves to dance and help people learn; 16 year old Christina Carpenter, a resident of the Ingersoll Houses, who wants to get into acting; 17 year old Imani Collins, who lives on Myrtle in Clinton Hill and studies the arts; 14 year old Cyndi Vazquez, who is a rising freshman at Dr. Susan S. McKinney High School; and 17 year old Shakeem Carpenter, a resident of the Ingersoll Houses, who plays basketball for his school and admits to being "one of the best players alive."

In the summer months, the FRESH Teens are exploring health and nutrition, disparities in food access, how to cook fresh food, and urban farming practices, among other things. This includes interactive workshops, as well as field trips to the Central Brooklyn Public Health Office, East New York Farms!, and Fort Greene's own Ingersoll Garden of Eden. In the fall, the teens will be trained in a variety of leadership skills, from public speaking to workshop facilitation to how to use social media to en-

gage other youth with food. And engaging other youth is exactly what they will do. Once their skills are solidified, the youth will design workshops based on what they have learned, and lead those workshops at local schools and community centers. These workshops will not only serve as their first foray into community food education, but they will also be an opportunity for the youth to do outreach, getting their peers excited for a neighborhood youth food summit. The summit, which will be a gathering of around 50 youth from the neighborhood, will occur during the first week of November, and will be organized by the FRESH Teens themselves. The summit will serve as an opportunity for a large group of youth in the neighborhood to get together in one place, participate in educational workshops, and strategize around creative ways for youth to play a role in improving Fort Greene's food environment.



The teens sample some fresh herbs.

The FRESH Teens program is a part of MARP's Myrtle Eats Fresh Initiative, which includes a number of projects that engage community members in activities to improve access to healthy, affordable food on Myrtle Avenue, and in the surrounding neighborhoods of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill. In addition to the FRESH Teens program, projects include a weekly community-run farm stand (Thursdays, 4-7pm at 177 Myrtle), a community chefs program, creating and expanding community gardens on public housing grounds, and the formation of a neighborhood food policy task force.

For more information about the FRESH Teens program and the rest of the Myrtle Eats Fresh Initiative, contact Sam at (718) 230-1689 or sam@myrtleavenue.org.

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LOCATION:

The Town Hall of Fort Greene- LAPC, 85 S. Oxford St. (corner of S. Oxford & Lafayette Ave.) Meeting Room, enter on S. Oxford St.

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Newsletter by Abby Weissman

FGA Neighborhood Meeting to Discuss Street Safety on September 20

Fort Greene has experienced a significant increase in local automobile, bicycle and pedestrian traffic in recent years. Old timers may remember when streets were less trafficked and our sidewalks mostly empty after dark. Today intersections in "trendy Fort Greene" can be busy day and night, with vehicles fighting for space with those on foot or in baby strollers. Add to this mix the many trucks and cars cutting through our neighborhood sometimes at high speeds to reach major roadways. While increasing activity has been mostly good for the neighborhood, the present mix can also prove lethal. Witness the recent fatal accident to Fort Greene resident and mother Aileen McKay-Dalton, for whom a community vigil was held July 14.

It is entirely appropriate that the next Fort Greene opening meeting Monday, September 20 is entitled "Streets" and will address these and related issues. Presenters include Christopher Hrones from D.O.T. who will discuss local traffic flow and calming strategies, Paul Steely White from Transportation Alternatives, who will talk about present and proposed bike lanes, and M. Blaise Backer, Executive Director, Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership (MARP/BID)-to discuss Myrtle Pedestrian Plaza and streetscape improvements between Hall and Emerson. We also hope to have an update on District Attorney Hynes investigation of the McKay-Dalton accident.

Please come to this September 20 meeting. You can ask questions and express your concerns. The meeting will be held at the Lafayette Presbyterian Church meeting room, with refreshments served at 7:00 pm. and meeting to start at 7:30. Please enter at 85 South Oxford Street.

Peter Angelo Simon

Interview with the Fort Greene Photographer



Copyright Peter Angelo Simon, 2010

Email: psimon134@artblink.net

Website: PeterAngeloSimon.com

FGA Welcomes Additional Board Members

The FGA would like to welcome our new Board Members.

Remember you can now reach any FGA Board Member by using their first name@HistoricFortGreene.org.



Lillian Jean-Baptiste has been a resident of Fort Greene, Brooklyn since 1995. "I knew I found "home" when I discovered Fort Greene offers everything that I need within walking distance. I did not have to go to New York City to have a great time." Over the past 15 years Lillian honed her Advertising, Marketing and Event Production skills at major advertising, fashion and entertainment firms; she has worked on television and radio productions and spent time working with not-for-profits. Innovative ideas, a fresh perspective and the belief that every encounter is a business opportunity are the drivers to Lillian Jean-Baptiste success. Lillian Jean-Baptiste is also a member Brooklyn Women Coalition and the Greene Garden.



Marcos Salazar is a leadership researcher for the Girl Scouts of the USA, author of *The Turbulent Twenties Survival Guide*, speaker on life after college topics, and owner of BoroThreads.com, a hyperlocal New York clothing business. Marcos is also on the board and writer for *The Hill*, volunteer for Fort Greene Strategic Neighborhood Action Partnership (SNAP), and affiliated with the Brooklyn Food Coalition, Green Hill Food Coop, and Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn. Marcos holds a psychology degree from Amherst College and a Masters in Organizational Management from The George Washington University. He lives happily on Cumberland St.



Siyon Kim has lived in and out of the neighborhood since 1997; becoming a permanent Fort Greene resident by 2002. She has a M.A. in Education and can be seen at all hours walking her dogs in Fort Greene Park.

Q: How would you characterize the kind of photography you do?

PAS: I live in dread of that question because to get any real sense of what I do you have to see it, and I do many different kinds of things, some "experimental," some "classical." When I travel – Brazil, India, Ireland, Mozambique, and here too - my favorite images are usually scenes with one or two people in them who have a sense of mystery about them. It's the color, the light and something happening you can't quite put your finger on. I like that. Experimentally, a few years ago I photographed circus acrobats. I used slightly slow exposures to capture the movement, and then I worked digitally to undermine the realistic color and detail. For me these images convey an essential spirit of circus; people think they're paintings.

Q: What's it like for a photographer living in Fort Greene?

PAS: There's a fine interplay here between quiet brownstone living and the vibrancy of this creative community. And it's visually rich; I've lived here for twenty-six years and I'm always seeing something I've never seen before.

Q: What are you doing at the moment?

PAS: Very busy: a book of documentary photographs called *To Be A Circus*, archiving my work of the last 35 years and teaching photography workshops in my house. Many people harbor a hunger to express themselves visually in a more satisfying way. We work to refine each individuals' personal vision. And that's what I continue to do in my own photography. I'm always looking to tease out "The Photographer Unknown" in me.

On Community by Richard Norton Vice-Chair, FGA

One of the joys of living in Fort Greene is its growing sense of community. This spirit of a common interest can cross economic, cultural and ethnic lines, and it is not unlike what is found in a small town. Walking its streets to shop at a locally owned store, or perhaps to take the House Tour, familiar faces say "hello," and "how are you?" Information is exchanged; births, family and individual accomplishments, illnesses and deaths are shared. While Fort Greene is by no means parochial, as a small town might be—after all we are 10 minutes to Manhattan by car or by almost every city subway, and it has an almost boundless diversity of cultural activities—it does reduce that degree of separation between families and individuals. While conformity is not demanded, Fort Greene residents often see the need to be good community citizens.

What makes for a successful community? Geography plays a part. That Fort Greene is relatively small in size creates interconnections between residents sometimes in unusual ways, and that it is near economic and transportation centers is important to sustainability. Street design with commercial streets interlaced with residential areas encourages community spirit. Architecture is another factor. That much of Fort Greene is made up of structures of relatively small footprints abutting each other reduces the need to isolate oneself in an automobile to get to and fro. And large residential buildings are now limited by new zoning laws encouraging contextual or human-scale development adding to a sense of a small town. The many local parks of Fort Greene cause further human interaction.

It can also be argued that diversity is an important factor. Suppose you were a home owner in a town or suburb with a population of largely one ethnic background, whether you were of that background or not. If someone of a different background decided to move there, you might fear that the value of your home might drop, which means you might be one of many who decides to sell. This does not happen, as it once did in the 1950's, in Fort Greene where diversity is celebrated.

Finally block and community organizations have been created to deal with issues that local politicians might ignore. These organizations create further interaction while hopefully improving or sustaining the community. The Fort Greene Association is only one of many volunteer organizations in Fort Greene, and while it supports this community spirit, it is doubtful that it would be as successful in a different situation, where positive factors do not exist. The FGA is but one player in a mutually supportive community that is Fort Greene. Let all be mindful of the importance of our community.



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Meeting Room, entrance on South Oxford Street

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NEWSCENES

ABRIELA DE LA VEGA: JEWELRY, HOME AND CLOTHING. 88 S. Portland. The jewelry is hand-crafted by owner Gabriela, clothing is vintage or hand-made by small designers, items for the home are unique pieces. Gabriela, 16-year Fort Greene resident, has created within a small boutique a world of items to delight the senses.

EN. 120 Lafayette Ave corner of Cumberland. Bar, Restaurant. Afro-Fusion cuisine. Attractive, Contemporary African décor by Nigerian owner Humphrey Ude. A friendly happy hour spot. 347-725-3565

These two new spaces add flavor to our neighborhood, enjoy them both!

WELCOME TO THE NEW BABY

BARZEL NOA FONTINI BEN-DOV came into this world on March 11, 2010 at 1:17 AM. She was born wide-eyed, healthy and at home on South Portland Avenue! Congratulations to moms Ariella Ben Dov and Rebecca Mc Bride.

REMEMBERING

FRITZ DUTEAU: A long time resident of the community. He is famous and loved by so many friends and neighbors for his early on hosting of Fort Greene Association House Tour After Parties. Fritz would prepare mountains of savory and delicious dishes to keep the House Tour workers happy. A task he performed for well over a decade.

ILEEN MCKAY DALTON: Another South Portland Avenue resident, wife and mother of three. She was a woman who so truly loved the neighborhood and will be most sadly missed.

ROBERT PATERSON: Staunch advocate for preservation and for saving Admirals Row at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Tall and imposing – and ever loquacious – Robert researched his topics thoroughly before defending arguments toward the promotion of historical accuracy.

WILSON REINHARDT: A resident of South Portland Ave. for nearly half a century. Wilson will be lovingly remembered as a wonderful neighbor and active Block Association member, famous for hosting Block Parties especially in the early 70's.

FRANK ROMEO: A most pleasant, helpful pharmacist at the Greene Community Pharmacy on Fulton Street between South Portland and South Oxford Streets. Frank was always giving above and beyond personal attention and service and will be warmly missed by his staff and neighborhood customers.

There will be a memorial service for Frank Romeo on Saturday, September 11, 2010 at Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church from 5-6 pm.

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The FGA is continuing to bring in-sightful discussion around topics that affect your life in Fort Greene. Be sure to mark these dates in your calendar for the next FGA Meeting.

FGA Neighborhood Meetings 2010 – 2011

- 20 September 2010
- 15 November 2010
- 3 December 2010 – Holiday Party
- 28 February 2011
- 18 April 2011
- 20 June 2011

FLOWERS . FOOD . FRIENDSHIP

Over the past many months my health has been in decline. But all along you, my neighbors, have been concerned and caring. This to say how much that has meant to me. You lightened and brightened my days. Much appreciation.

- dorris

FGA to Hold Elections

Has it been two years already? As part of the November Neighborhood Meeting there will be an election of Fort Greene Association Executive Board. The following 2 year term positions are up for nomination: chair; vice-chair; corresponding secretary; recording secretary; treasurer and six members-at-large.

If you would like to volunteer or have recommendations of friends and/or neighbors who are willing to volunteer to work for our wonderful neighborhood please contact Fred Lasker the Election Committee Chair at 718.875.1856 or fred@HistoricFortGreene.org as soon as possible. Do remember that nominations can also be made as as at the actual Neighborhood Meeting itself.

FGA November 15th, 2010 Official Election Slate

- Chair: Paul Palazzo
- Vice-Chair: Richard Norton
- Treasurer: Sam Johnson
- Recording Secretary: Fred Lasker
- Corresponding Secretary: Mary Priebe

Members-at-Large:

- Lillian Jean-Baptiste
- Susan Butler
- Naomi Dickerson
- Roslyn Huebener
- Jed Marcus

Alternates:

- Siyon Breeze
- Reverend David Dyson
- Georgianna Glose
- dorris gains golomb
- Kay Lee
- Marcos Salazar