



# FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN

NOVEMBER 2011

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](http://www.HistoricFortGreene.org)

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Next FGA Meeting:  
Monday, November 21,  
7PM

Brooklyn Music School  
Auditorium, 126 Saint  
Felix Street

**TOPIC: Shining a  
Spotlight on Public Safety**

Fort Greene is one of the  
safest neighborhoods  
in the City. Learn how  
to keep it that way and  
how to stay aware and be  
safe in the neighborhood.  
This and all the local  
neighborhood news.

Arrive early to join us for  
our Neighborhood Mixer.  
FGA Neighborhood Meet-  
ings are free and open  
to all, homeowners and  
renters alike.

## FGA Membership Weighs in on Fowler Plaza

### Create a Green Oasis without closing South Elliott

Fort Greene is scheduled to receive a great gift, the redesign of what is known locally as Fowler Square. Originally a blank plot of tarmac, residents and longtime FGA members Ruth and Martin Goldstein, Fredrick Lasker, and Howard Pitsch politicked, raised Cain and substantial funds to restore the statue and plaza to its current state. Now another step in the evolution of Fowler Square, indeed Fort Greene, is upon us.

In June of 2010 the local business coalition the Fulton Area Business Alliance [FAB], to which former FGA Chair Phillip Kellogg is the Manager, garnered support to study a redesign and enhancement of Fowler Square from the same forces which established the Square. At the time the Board of the FGA supported a possible expansion of the footprint of Fowler Square to



Join the FGA on November 19, 12 noon for the annual Holiday Decorating of Fowler Square

allow for proper landscaping and the creating of a proper "Gateway to Fort Greene." News of the proposal was published in the September 2010 FGA Newsletter and after hearing members comments online and at the Neighborhood Meetings it was decided to take a closer look by conducting an online survey of the membership. The survey conducted during the first three weeks of July 2011 could be accessed by all but the results were filtered so that only active FGA members could determine the course of the organization which now has grown to represent over 550 households in Fort Greene. Using the same questions, from the heated informational meetings sponsored by NYC DOT and FAB held on June 28th and 29th, 2011, the following was determined.

*(Continued inside) >*

## Challenging the Asian Tiger Mosquito

Over the past eight years our neighborhoods have suffered from the invasion of the insidious Asian Tiger Mosquito (*aedes albopictus*). Small in size, it silently and in numbers attacks the skin during daytime threatening the spread of viral diseases and rendering our yards useless from mid-July to the freezing season. Repellents only partially work, and insect traps presently on the market have not been proven effective against this infestation.

However there may be hope. Recent reports by the USDA and in the New York TIMES Science Section, September 27, 2011, suggest that creating a nectar of 5 percent sugar, 1 percent boric acid and the rest water may interrupt the ability of the female to lay eggs. Its use, either by spraying this inexpensive and harmless mixture on lawns and foliage, or creating traps which attract the mosquito using this same mixture, has reduced populations up to 90 percent in ten days. (One suggestion for making a trap: fill a soda bottle with the mixture,



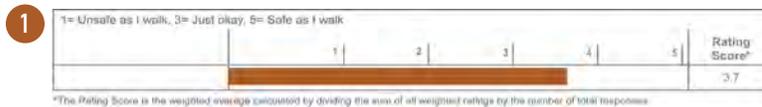
maybe adding a dash of brown sugar or rotting fruit juice, put the filled bottle in a sock with a wick which keeps the sock soaked with the elixir, and hang the sock where the mosquitoes are). One caveat: This method has yet been tested in non-arid climates, where there are many competing sources of nectar. However it is possible that if many of our neighbors spray or set traps, it might indeed be effective. It is known that the individual Asian Tiger may travel only 200 yards during its lifetime, so local efforts may remain beneficial.

Richard Norton on our FGA Board is presently investigating this new possibility and is in contact with experts in the field. We may have a public meeting soon on this subject to spread the word, and possibly using our community as testing ground for this approach. Meanwhile no one is stopping you from making your own experiment. Richard already has traps out and would be interested in hearing about your own ideas and results. Contact Vice-Chair Richard Norton at [richard@HistoricFortGreene.org](mailto:richard@HistoricFortGreene.org).



## Create a Green Oasis without closing South Elliott

**Question #1 - The pedestrian experience -** On a scale of 1 to 5 how do you feel as a pedestrian when you walk around the Fowler Square area? With an encouraging grade of 3.7 out of 5 here are some of the survey respondent's comments:



*"There are double parked and triple parked cars. Cars blow through these lights to get to the 'greens' on Lafayette, as well as to turn back onto Fulton as a 'shortcut'. Trucks are often double parked and you cannot see around them when trying to cross on S. Elliott. It feels really unsafe."*

*"Generally, I feel safe in that area, but crossing Fulton is a bit dodgy, particularly if you are coming from BAM or are on that side of the Street. It is not so bad if you're near the bus stop/subway entrance, but the angular crossing, though improved recently with the extension and clear crossing markers, is still dicey. The pavement is a bit narrow and beat up on the triangle itself and could do with some TLC."*

*"Once you are on the plaza, it is ok. It is crossing Fulton Street that is dangerous as drivers are aggressive and making a left turn onto Lafayette is dangerous and difficult."*

**Question #2 - Regardless whether you feel unsafe or safe, are there any intersections that are particularly uncomfortable?** - seemed to reveal what was already suggested in Question #1 that Fulton Street is unsafe. Comments included:

*"The corner of Fulton Street & Lafayette Avenue - Cars are turning from all directions. Trying to walk from the Medical Center to the triangle or CT Muffin to the triangle is sometimes tricky."*

*"Where Lafayette and Fulton cross is difficult, both on bike, walking, and in cars. Part of the difficulty is the insistence on diagonal cross walks, instead of finding the shortest crossing space from a corner."*

*"Crossing Lafayette and Fulton - long diagonal crossing distances and poor visibility with lots of buses, cars, delivery trucks (also double-parked), plus bikes and pedestrians."*

**Question #3 - What (if anything) does Fowler Square mean to you today? -provided some insight into the emotional value of the Square.** Here are some thoughts:

*"The statue and trees are beautiful. It is an invitation into the neighborhood."*

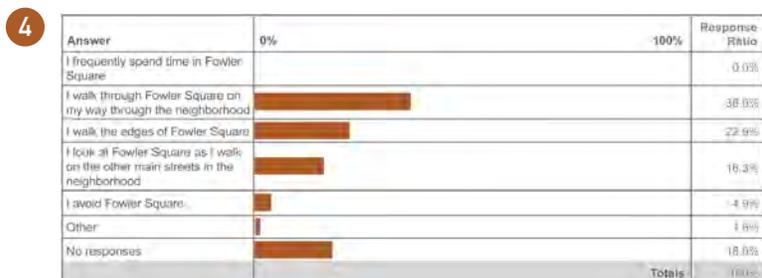
*"A nice bit of green space in the busy area where Fulton and Lafayette meet. Love the holiday lights."*

*"It's a nice little oasis in a chaotic intersection. I always appreciate the xmas decorations on the statue, and I think the story of the statue is a nice symbol for the neighborhood."*

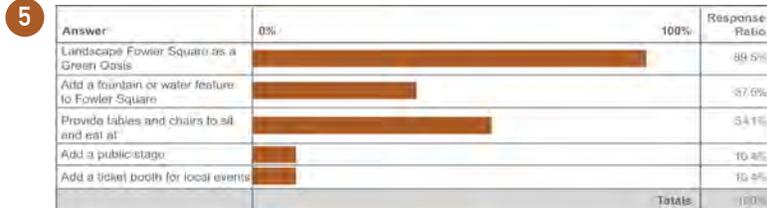
*"A sad-looking place with so much potential to be a neighborhood hub, but it isn't now."*

*"A bit of pedestrian space, a bit of history, nice spot for some flowers and holiday decorations. But not a spot to linger. Just a place to pass getting somewhere else."*

**Question #4 - Do you ever spend time there, or do you just walk along its edges?** - corroborated the previous remarks that Fowler Square is more of a visual vantage point than destination.



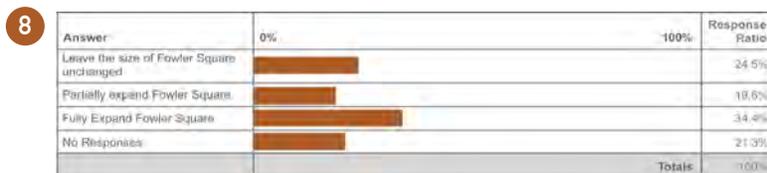
**Question #5 - Envisioning what could happen in a reimagined Fowler Square, what would you like to see happen there if it were reimagined?** The clear favorites to this question were to Landscape Fowler Square as a Green Oasis and to provide table and chairs with adding a water feature as a close third.



**For Questions #6 - What would draw you to or make you use Fowler Square? and #7 - What would make you spend time in Fowler Square?** Visit the FGA website at [HistoricFortGreene.org](http://HistoricFortGreene.org) for the respondent's revealing commentary.

The most contentious **Question #8 - Of the scenarios whether or not to expand the footprint of Fowler Square which do you favor?** - provided the most nuanced answers and suggested that the size of the Square remain unchanged or partially expand, edging out the proposal to fully expand Fowler Square. To get further clarity on potential impact to the street life around the Square the FGA interviewed some of the surrounding businesses which are part of also part of FAB.

During the interviews Dave Finnegan of Mullane's Bar and Grill said *"I would not want the perimeter of the triangle to change nor do I want to see South Elliott closed. Let's improve the triangle with flowers and such and then consider partially enlarging it if necessary."* In agreement the owners of the Academy Restaurant said strongly *"they did not want South Elliott closed."* Echoing the majority, Ahmed and Nasser from the Connecticut Muffin said they also preferred leaving the triangle at the current configuration but putting in plants and flowers and seating: *"Make the spot a beautiful entry to Fort Greene."*



And finally

**Question #9 - What (if any) concerns do you have about a plaza at Fowler Square?** provided even more insight.

*"I would avoid a ticket booth and anything that makes it busier. The point of the re-designing, as I see it, is to calm the space down with some greenery."*

*"I like the idea of full expansion, but then what does that do to the flow of traffic on surrounding streets? That is unclear from your options. For example, cutting off the bit of road between 5th Ave and Fort Greene Pl ace has made getting around in a car really, really much tougher."*

*"That it does not become an area for drugs, drinking, large groups loitering or skateboarding. I live across from Cuyler Gore and there are often people drinking and riding skateboards recklessly in the playground."*

The FGA membership, its leadership past and present, are inextricably connected to Fowler Square. It is a place that was created by and for the residents of this great neighborhood and demonstrates what can be achieved when neighbors get together for a common goal. Although the FGA is not the sponsor of the revised Fowler Plaza it has performed this service for the benefit of all Fort Greeners. Full responses can be viewed at [www.HistoricFortGreene.org](http://www.HistoricFortGreene.org).



## Juneteenth Celebration, Special Presentation and Reception Recap

by Lillian Jean-Baptiste

June 20, 2011, the Fort Greene Association (FGA) gathered for our 1st Annual Juneteenth Celebration, Special Presentation and Reception. Sponsored by Long Island University Brooklyn Campus, in association with Soul of Brooklyn Week, the FGA commemorated African-American freedom while honoring our 2011 Black History Month Honorees - individuals who've made their mark in and around Fort Greene. The collaborative event included performances by Creative Outlet Dance Theatre of Brooklyn, David Pilgrim of The Soulfolk Experience and Ronald Edmonds Learning Center - MS 113 Jazz Band. Yvonne Graham, Deputy Brooklyn Borough President presented the FGA with a proclamation for our Black History Month and Juneteenth efforts. Please visit our website [www.HistoricFortGreene.org](http://www.HistoricFortGreene.org) to see additional photos from the evening's festivities. Special thanks go to our reception sponsors: Sans Souci, Brooklyn Moon Cafe, Mazie's, and Buffalo Boss.

### Submissions Sought for FGA Black History 2012

The Fort Greene Association (FGA) is preparing to salute the contributions of Fort Greene African and Caribbean Americans and needs your help! Now thru December 1, 2011 the FGA is accepting submissions of African and Caribbean Americans who've made significant contributions in and around Fort Greene, Brooklyn. Nominate African and Caribbean American Fort Greene business owners, community organizers, educators, residents, students and entrepreneurs. We are looking to recognize the contribution of African and Caribbean American Fort Greene pioneers of their field who have paved the road for others, individuals who commit

selfless acts to help others, and those who contribute to improving the everyday quality of life for Fort Greene.

Please submit your nominations by midnight December 1, 2011 to [communications@historicfortgreene.org](mailto:communications@historicfortgreene.org) with FGA Salutes Fort Greene African and Caribbean Americans in the subject field. When submitting your nominations, please include your name and phone number and the reason why the FGA should salute your nominees. Additionally, please include your nominees' name, e-mail, phone number and their accomplishments. Lastly, please let them know that you are planning to nominate them.

#### Submissions rules and disclaimers

- Nominations must be received by midnight December 1, 2011.
- No more than three nominations can be made per person.
- Nominees can be living or deceased.
- Nominees must be either a student or resident of Fort Greene, or working/worked on projects that have made a significant impact on Fort Greene or had/have a business that operates or services the needs of Fort Greene residents.
- Participants cannot nominate themselves and Fort Greene Association Board members cannot be nominated. Nominations found to be in violation of this rule will be discarded.
- The Fort Greene Association will notify finalists prior to public announcement of honorees.

## It's Time to Move On – For Our Children's Sake

by Siyon Breeze, FGA Schools Committee

Headless for two years, now running headless into its third straight year, Public School 20, our neighborhood elementary school, is still not close to getting a permanently appointed principal. Located on the corner of Adelphi and Willoughby, the school serves a major geographical section of the Fort Greene community. Given our thriving elementary school population, the growing numbers of families choosing to settle in Fort Greene, and the common-sense awareness of how critical it is to have a successful and locally attended elementary school in the neighborhood, it is surprising that we have gone so long without a principal. You are probably asking yourself the same question that plagues me: What is going on here?

When Lena Barbera was assigned the temporary position of interim acting principal of P.S. 20, the word on the streets was hopeful. Neighbors were excited and there was much anticipation that Ms. Barbera, who has been well-received by the school community, would soon be given the permanent post. We all thought the deal would be sealed in 6 months or so. Instead, we are now looking into the horizon at year number three with no sign of a resolution. Has the Department of Education forgotten about us?

Of course, we all know that the last principal of P.S. 20 was shown out the door under a storm cloud of allegations that are yet to be determined, but c'mon Folks! –

isn't this taking too long!?!? Our children are growing up, more children are being born, and as involved parents, we need to know who is going to steer the boat at P.S. 20 so we can entrust our kids to a stable, established program. Why should our children be kept on hold for bureaucratic red tape?

Please come and give us your support! Come one, come all, we need your help! The Fort Greene Association is submitting a petition requesting Chancellor Dennis Walcott to find a resolution quickly in the matter of appointing a permanent principal at P.S. 20. The petition will be available to sign at the Greene Market on Saturday mornings at the corner of Washington Park and DeKalb Avenue. Please find a minute to drop by and write your name to the petition. Whether you have school-age children or not, every signature counts! The Department of Education cannot continue to ignore us if we push them for action. We must show them we are united in our purpose and that our neighborhood works together. We care about our local schools and we want the DOE to care about our schools, too. We hope all our neighbors will come out on Saturday in a huge show of community support.

Siyon Breeze is chair of the FGA Schools Committee. Contact the committee with your school trials and tribulations at [schools@HistoricFortGreene.org](mailto:schools@HistoricFortGreene.org).



**FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION**  
HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN

**Next Fort Greene Association Neighborhood Mixer & Meeting:  
Monday, November 21, 7PM**

Brooklyn Music School Auditorium, 126 Saint Felix Street  
Please visit [www.HistoricFortGreene.org](http://www.HistoricFortGreene.org) for meeting detail updates

**TOPIC: Shining a Spotlight on Public Safety**

Fort Greene is one of the safest neighborhoods in the City. Learn how to keep it that way and how to stay aware and be safe in the neighborhood. This and all the local neighborhood news.

Arrive early to join us for our Neighborhood Mixer. FGA Neighborhood Meetings are free and open to all, homeowners and renters alike. See you there.

Box 170563, Brooklyn NY 11217-0563

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**Catch the Fort Greene Holiday Spirit!**

Here are a few ways you can share your talent, time, resources and generosity that will make a positive impact in your community.

**Thanksgiving Food Drive and Holiday Meal**

**Accepting Donations:**

**Non-perishable Now – November 22, Perishable – Nov. 22**

Kick off the spirit of giving by supporting Fort Greene SNAP and the families of Auburn Shelter. As part of Fort Greene SNAP’s continued outreach campaign and advocacy for the residents of Fort Greene’s Auburn Shelter, they are hosting another Thanksgiving party at their office. Last year Fort Greene and Clinton Hill residents and businesses generously chipped in to help SNAP provide a Thanksgiving feast for thirty residents and they need your help again this year.

The dinner is taking place at their office 324 Myrtle Avenue, between Washington Park and Carlton Avenue on Tuesday November 22nd. SNAP is in need of prepared holiday dish donations such as main courses, side dishes and deserts that can be dropped off the day of the dinner, November 22nd 9:30AM – 12PM. They are also collecting at their office now until November 22nd beverages, non-perishable foods, dinner ware, sternos/ food warmers, etc. Please contact Margo Esbrand at [margo@fortgreenesnap.org](mailto:margo@fortgreenesnap.org) or (718) 694-6957 to coordinate your donation drop off.

**Help Decorate Fort Greene’s Gateway – Fowler Square  
November 19th 12PM – 2PM**

Join the FGA as we decorate Fowler Square, Fort Greene’s Gateway that welcomes visitors and residents during the holiday season.

Every year the FGA board members and neighbors get together to decorate Fowler Square and string lights around Civil War hero General Fowler’s statue. To learn more about General Edward Fowler and Fort Greene’s rich history please purchase a copy of “Images of America Fort Greene,” a book

to enjoy and help us all to connect the small world of Fort Greene to the larger picture of Brooklyn, New York City, and the world itself. Books will be available for sale at Fowler Square and are also available for sale at Greenlight Bookstore, the Brooklyn Tourism Gift Shop and on our website [www.HistoricFortGreene.org](http://www.HistoricFortGreene.org). Proceeds from “Images of America Fort Greene” book sales support Fort Greene community programs. “Images of America Fort Greene,” also makes a great unique holiday gift!

**The 2nd Annual Fort Greene Association Toiletry Drive  
Accepting Donations: Now until December 15th**

You collect them when you travel on business or vacation. You receive them as product samples in the mail or when shopping. These items are just collectible dust and taking up space in your bathroom pantry and random drawers.

The FGA and the Brooklyn Music School is asking you to donate your sealed unused toiletry items to be donated to the families and residents of Fort Greene’s Tillary Street Women’s Shelter and Auburn Shelter. We are looking for tooth past, mouth wash, soap, shampoo, conditioner, shaving cream, perfume/cologne, lotion, baby products, hair and skin care products, etc. Travel size or normal size, any items you can donate are greatly appreciated.

Please drop off your donations now until December 15th

Monday – Friday 1PM – 8PM

Saturday 9AM – 5PM

The Brooklyn Music School

126 Saint Felix Street, between Hanson Place and Lafayette Avenue

Brooklyn, New York 11217

If your store or corporation is interested in making a donation please contact Lillian Jean-Baptiste, Communications and Community Engagement Chair at [Lillian@HistoricFortGreene.org](mailto:Lillian@HistoricFortGreene.org) to coordinate the receipt of your donation. Our goal is to have enough items to give to 300 individuals at Fort Greene Shelters.

Turn your dreams into reality.

**Jerry Minsky**

**Senior Vice President**

Licensed Real Estate Broker

Prudential Douglas Elliman

Real Estate

154 Seventh Avenue

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718-840-2080

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*[jerry.minsky@elliman.com](mailto:jerry.minsky@elliman.com)*

**Join your friends and  
neighbors for  
an Evening of  
Song & Good Cheer at the  
FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION**

# **Holiday Season Party**

**Friday, December 2, 2011 - 7 PM**

**138 South Oxford Street**

**Bring your favorite dish!**

**Beverages provided**

**Children's Entertainment**

**RSVP to [Holiday@HistoricFortGreene.org](mailto:Holiday@HistoricFortGreene.org)**

# The ABCs of Brooklyn

An Alphabet Guidebook for All Ages



*"Just like our eclectic borough, this book has something for everyone. It captures the charm, history, diversity and fun of Brooklyn.*

*It's all here in this appealing book, and I know you will love visiting the world's biggest neighborhood-Brooklyn, USA!"*

*- Borough President, Marty Markowitz*

Author G. Augustine Lynas, a graphic designer, sculptor, and teacher with photographer and co-author Peter Vadnai have created a beautiful photographic journey celebrating Brooklyn through the alphabet, and numbers.

**Available at [www.LynasPress.com](http://www.LynasPress.com) or local bookstores.**

Yes, I want to support the efforts of the Fort Greene Association.

Enclosed is my donation. (Check One)

\_\_\_ \$1000-Angel \_\_\_ \$200-Corporate \_\_\_ \$100-Patron \_\_\_ \$50-Friend / Family \_\_\_ \$30-Member

Please make your check payable to:  
FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION, INC.

And mail to:  
Fort Greene Association, Inc.,  
PO Box 170563  
Brooklyn, NY 11217-0563

Find out more about the FGA at:  
[www.HistoricFortGreene.org](http://www.HistoricFortGreene.org)

NL

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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