



FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN

FEBRUARY 2008

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

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Aguayo & Huebener Realty Group is proud to underwrite this issue of the Fort Greene Association Newsletter

NEXT FGA MEETING:

Monday February 25 7:30 pm.
Light refreshments at 7pm.

LOCATION:

Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 S. Oxford St (Corner of S. Oxford and Lafayette Ave), entrance on S. Oxford St.

The Prison Ship Martyrs Memorial Centennial Celebration: a preview.

The first Martyrs Monument Memorial Celebration took place in 1908. To honor in our time these martyrs who gave their lives to secure our founding ideals, a grand centennial celebration is being planned in November 2008, 100 years later. Come hear all about the Centennial and volunteer to make it happen.



The Prison Ship Martyrs Monument, Carey Kirkella 2008

A Message from the FGA Chair

In November the Fort Greene Association sponsored a new forum designed to put the spotlight on a number of small local groups doing good works in Fort Greene. Each organization gave a capsule presentation of their programs to those in attendance and had a table to display literature. Representatives spoke with neighbors, signed up volunteers and collected small donations. The Fort Greene Association hopes to encourage and support the continued contributions of these groups through raising awareness in the community of the vital needs they address. If you are interested in finding out more about any of these groups and how you can support their efforts, whether through volunteering, donations of goods, services or money, you can contact them directly. Please refer to the contact list on the back page of this newsletter.

This month we open the General Meeting to the Centennial Committee of the Fort Greene Park Conservancy. They are launching a grass-roots project with potential global reach: The Prison Ship Martyrs Monument Centennial Celebration. They will inform you about the many aspects of this effort.

Also at the meeting will be a report on the Admiral's Row Mansions. The FGA continues to call for balanced neighborhood development that respects historic housing and retains the overall health of our community. At this time, the Admiral's Row Mansions and the neighborhoods surrounding the Atlantic Yards project are threatened with potential demolition. Opposition to this threat deserves our unflagging support.

We encourage you to join the FGA and lend a hand to our projects or develop an initiative that you think is important to enhance our environment

- Ursula Hegewisch, FGA Chair

Residential Permit Parking for the Downtown Brooklyn Area

In a 2004 study that City Council members Letitia James and David Yassky requested from the Mayor's office, it was found that commuter vehicles make up a significant percentage of vehicles parked in residential neighborhoods near downtown Brooklyn. Brooklyn Heights, Boerum Hill and Fort Greene had 46.82 percent of commuter parkers. This finding confirmed that the 3 areas involved were giant & park n' ride neighborhoods and were prime for Residential Permit Parking (RPP).

The three neighborhoods, along with Clinton Hill, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, Concord Village, Park Slope, and Prospect Heights formed the Residential Permit Parking Committee. The committee believes Residential Permit Parking is an important measure for controlling traffic congestion in the downtown area and should be implemented whether or not other measures to control traffic, such as Congestion Pricing, are adopted. They came up with the following plan:

RPP would be in effect Monday through Friday from approximately 7 AM to 7 PM, excluding major holidays; hours could be tailored to each neighborhood; shoppers and visitors would be allowed to park for limited periods (two to three hours); a nominal fee would be charged for a permit and the revenue created used to help administer the parking program; yearly permits would be available to anyone who has proof of residency and proof of a car registered to that specific address; temporary permits for residents' use and visitor permits would be issued to residents by the RPP office; enforcement would be critical.

A residential permit parking plan is a necessary component to any alternative recommended. "Residential permit parking is used in many cities around the world to prevent gratuitous congestion from commuter parkers and could be used equally well in New York City. We believe it will work," stated Jo Anne Simon, during her testimony as part of the Interim Report of the New York City Traffic Congestion Mitigation Commission, January 24, 2008. Simon is State Committeewoman and Democratic District Leader from the 52nd Assembly District in Brooklyn, former president of the Boerum Hill Association, and RPP member.





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Duffield Street is a Win and a Worthy Cause

In December 2007, 227 Duffield Street was saved from the application of eminent domain and demolition thereby. The City, as agreed in a settlement, will redesign Willoughby Square Park to accommodate retention of the property. Owner Joy Chatel, who fought for 4 years to save her home, thanked the mayor for listening to her plea.

Then, Kevin Powell, community activist and writer stepped up to the plate to support her worthy cause. Says Powell: "I decided to produce the fundraiser for 227 Duffield Street because it is the right thing to do. Not only is the address an historic Brooklyn site where black and white abolitionists came together in their opposition to slavery, but, today, it is a symbol of the fight against irresponsible development. I was particularly struck by the story of Joy Chatel, this smallish 60-something woman who has survived two heart attacks, threats of foreclosure, yet she somehow managed to win a landmark eminent domain case in November 2007. So as a community organizer, I feel it is our responsibility to support people like Joy Chatel. This fundraiser (on 2/29/08) is to help raise funds for Ms. Chatel as she continues the battle to hold onto her home, and to eventually achieve her vision of underground railroad museum and cultural center right here in our beloved Brooklyn."



The door to freedom

For fundraiser information, go to www.myspace.com/227abolitionistplace.

2008 House Tour

Excitement is already building for the 2008 Fort Greene House Tour, being held on Sunday, May 4th.

Those who make the trip this spring will, as in 2006, enjoy an eclectic array of homes, from classic brownstones evoking Fort Greene's rich past to more modern homes at the cutting edge of taste and style. In addition to Fort Greene's houses, tour goers will also have the opportunity to explore some of our local businesses and other fascinating surprises that can be found only in Fort Greene.

The FGA is looking for "house sitters." For further information on becoming a house sitter, please contact Fred Lasker at 718 875-1856.

Update on Atlantic Yards

There are many rounds of legal and political fighting left in the struggle.

As a community we should all be proud. Our tenacious fight against Atlantic Yards has already had a profound effect on the project. Because of the commitment of Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn, and the commitment of our friends and neighbors who have joined the effort, this "done deal" of 2003 is not yet "done" in 2008. DDDDB has over 3500 individual donors and over 800 registered volunteers. And even with a median donation of just \$50, together we have stood head to head against one of the most powerful, politically connected developers in the country. Despite Forest City Ratner's multi-million dollar publicity campaign, Atlantic Yards is now seen, locally, nationally, and internationally, as the poster child for bad planning, bad process and abusive development.

LEGAL STATUS UPDATES:

Lawsuit in State Court on the Environmental Impact Statement

On April 4, 2007, twenty-six community groups filed a legal challenge against the state's environmental review and overall approval of Atlantic Yards. The plaintiffs alleged 11 different serious claims. On January 11, the judge ruled against the community. We are disappointed in the ruling and believe that the decision was wrongly decided. We are currently in the early stages of appealing the case, on three or four of the most important claims, on which we feel the judge erred on the facts and on the law. There will be a vigorous challenge to the state's blight study and the state's designation of the arena as a "civic project" under state statutory definition. A victory could stop the project entirely, or send it back into a new political environment where at minimum a new vote by Silver, Bruno and Spitzer would have to occur. The appeal process could take at least six months.

Lawsuit in Federal Court on New York State's Use of Eminent Domain to Seize Properties

In October 2006, thirteen property owners and tenants filed a lawsuit against New York State and Forest City Ratner charging that the use of eminent domain for Atlantic Yards is private use and therefore violates the US Constitution. After nearly 17 months of legal wrangling, the Second Circuit Court of Appeal ruled against the homeowners, business owners and residents. We are now preparing to petition the US Supreme Court to hear their case, in the hopes of finally going to trial over their claims and eventually keep their homes and businesses. If they keep their properties, Atlantic Yards cannot be built. Their case, organized by DDDDB and supported by the community with generous donations, involves important constitutional questions that every year affects tens of thousands of Americans citizens and local governments. They argue that the proffered public justification for

seizing private properties is a pretext for a private taking of property. The 2nd Circuit Court's ruling against the plaintiffs conflicts with other circuit court decisions. The plaintiffs' petition to the Supreme Court will rest on the argument that these conflicts need to be resolved by the highest court in the land.

FINANCING & POLITICAL STATUS:

According to Forest City Ratner's own legal papers, the lawsuits are having a chilling effect on their ability to gain private and public financing for the project. As we continue to defend our rights, that problem will persist. Ground has not been broken for the construction of the arena or any buildings. According to Ratner, the arena was supposed to open in 2006, then in 2009. Now they say 2010. We believe they are unable to secure bond financing for the arena, or financing for the housing, or for the properties they need, which is why they cannot move forward. The construction activity they are currently doing involves relocating public utilities (which taxpayers are paying for), demolishing some buildings they own, and relocating the rail yards. But what they are not doing, is constructing the project.

Given the public morass that the project has become, and the troubled economy are in, our politicians are becoming less and less comfortable with the project. In addition there is a dawning realization that this project is not what was once advertised. For example, just last week, also in court papers, Ratner's lawyers admitted to drastically lying about the amount of revenue the project would bring for the city and state. Their highly publicized "\$4 billion in tax revenues" was basically a made up number.

THE GOAL:

As long as the community keeps the pressure on politicians, keeps fighting in court, and remains vigilant, the 4-year old "done deal" is likely never to get done. Then we can start over and develop the rail yards in an equitable and sensible manner. DDDDB will continue to pursue every legal option to secure justice for the plaintiffs and the community. We will continue to seek every political option, and we will continue to promote the UNITY Community Development Plan in light of the markets not being conducive to Atlantic Yards going through. (see: www.unityplan.org)

To find out more information and get involved come to the DDDDB Community Meeting: "Update on the Struggle Against Ratner's Atlantic Yards Project and For Fair Development," on Thursday, March 13, at 7pm. Located at the Hanson Place United Methodist Church. 144 Saint Felix Street at Hanson Place. Fort Greene. Save the Date.

Written by Abby Weissman and Lucy Koteen for Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn.

The FGA Interviews Centennial Committee Chair, Ruth Goldstein

FGA: Will you tell us about the planned event that is up-coming regarding the Fort Greene Park Martyr's Monument?

RG: It's actually a series of events very much emphasizing educational outreach and community-building around the Centennial of the Martyrs Monument.

FGA: What inspired you to create these events?

RG: The story of the prison ships, the reason the Martyrs were willing to make such an extreme sacrifice needs to be told, now perhaps more than ever. The re-dedication of the Monument offers the perfect opportunity to re-commit to our founding ideals. And of course the preservationist urge is ever alive. The Monument is such a masterpiece, the last work of Stanford White, one of America's pre-eminent architects, it needs to be better known and celebrated.

FGA: How will you achieve the educational outreach?

RG: Programming for the schools is underway - seminars are being planned for immediate and high school students. Three certified history teachers are working on a committee doing syllabuses for a two-day seminar on the centennial. They will focus on the principles enunciated in the Declaration of Independence and how those principles are or are not reflected in our society today. We'll have discussion on issues about which safeguards to our security are appropriate but still save the rights that make us the society we are. Everything we do in programming will make our founding principles engaging to young people, our future young citizens. When the seminars are completed the students will have an opportunity to create a work of art or to write an essay which will be entered into juried competitions. The winning art works will be displayed in a lobby show at MoCADA and included in the souvenir program as will the winning essays.

FGA: How has the community responded to your outreach?

RG: The response of the community has been up-lifting, reassuring, and thrilling, but somehow not surprising. After all we are celebrating the very ideals that unite us as a



community and as a nation. And Brooklyn is the most American of cities.

FGA: Will the outreach to children involve music?

RG: The choral piece we are commissioning is being written by a third-generation Brooklyn-based composer. The text will be based on the word of the martyrs from memoirs and letters and writings of Walt Whitman, but it will be a modern piece of music. Even our outreach is a contemporary way of presenting information to young children.

FGA: What is the scope of this incredible effort?

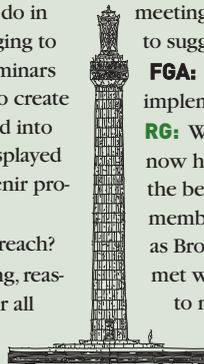
RG: There will be a huge international focus. We are inviting the heads of countries whose nationals volunteered to fight in the War of Independence, from countries as large as France and as small as Nevis, as near as Mexico and as far away as the Philippines.

FGA: Are you doing other activities that lead up to the Centennial?

RG: This year our activities will relate to the Centennial and help build enthusiasm and interest in it. Our Fort Greene Park Conservancy film series will include films that have a Revolutionary War or patriotic theme but be family oriented and have high entertainment value. There is a surprising dearth of films meeting our criteria but we are diligently hunting and are open to suggestions.

FGA: What else is needed for the vision to be successfully implemented?

RG: We need funds and volunteers. The Centennial Committee now has about 26 members, all volunteers, arguably some of the best of Brooklyn, and the Metro area (we have Committee members from NJ, Queens, Manhattan and Long Island as well as Brooklyn). We are plugging away on the funding and have met with some success. What we trying to do - our goal - is to make the Centennial an historic event with contemporary relevance.



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WHERE WERE THEY FROM?

Test Your Knowledge of the Revolutionary War's International Flavor with Our Pop Quiz!

What country were they from?

- 1. George Farragut** - Soldier, Sailor and Privateer, who fought alongside Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry.
- 2. Juan de Miralles** - Close friend of the Washingtons, credited with saving Washington's army in 1799 by supplying the soldiers with limes when they were dying of scurvy.
- 3. Filippo Mazzei** - Physician and tactician who fought alongside Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry, helped persuade French to support the Revolution financially and militarily.
- 4. Christian Febiger** - Joined the Massachusetts Militia following the Lexington Alarm, fought at Bunker Hill and served until peace was secured eight years later, confidante of George Washington, mustered out as a Colonel.
- 5. Count Axel von Fersen** - Distinguished himself in the Siege of Yorktown serving as aide-de-champ to Rochambeau, later reported to be Marie Antoinette's lover.

A Novel Idea for Chase Bank

We are happy to announce that the Chase Bank has agreed to fund the publication of a history-based graphic novel for children.

As part of its effort to develop an educational component to the Centennial project, the Centennial Committee envisioned a children's graphic novel (comic book). This children's book will create the story of the American Revolution in images and text that are enjoyable to read, while also serving as an excellent educational tool.

Brownstone Brooklyn Garden Tour

The "Brownstone Brooklyn Garden District" Committee are now planning Garden Walk 2008 for June. The tour, which includes Fort Greene, Prospect Heights & Clinton Hill, welcomes suggestions of gardens to visit. If you would like to suggest a garden within the Garden District to them please get in touch with Patti Hagan, 718-219-2137 or pb.brooklyn@gmail.com.



Answers to Quiz: 1. Catalonia. He was born Jordi Farragut; 2. Havana, Cuba; 3. Tuscany; 4. Denmark; 5. Sweden.



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NEWSCENES

BARKING BROWN, 468 Myrtle Ave (Washington/Hall). Mon-Sat 10-10; Sun 10-9. New clothing and gift boutique owned by Pratt design grad student, JuYoungOn. Be intrigued. Stop by. 718 638-3757

SQUARE ROOT CAFÉ, 584 Myrtle Ave at Classon; brand new cafe owned by husband & wife Joe Persampieri and Eda Sanchez-Persampieri. Say hello, see the menu.

STILL HIP, Grand Ave (Clifton / Lafayette) Childrens clothing store - great gifts. See for yourself.

AUTOUR DU MONDE, Corner of Fulton & Clinton. New eaterie. Check the cuisine.

NU YU DAY SPA, 43 Clifton Place at Grand Ave. Just for you - enjoy.

The SPEAK EASY, 132 Greene Avenue @ Waverly, 5-11 pm everyday. New restaurant owned by Merle Exit. Comfortable, intimate space with bar. 10 entrees, appetizers, desserts. Extensive wine list; Choose your menu favorites, wish them well. 718 230-3520

FROSTED MOON, 88 South Portland (Lafayette/Fulton) Formerly on Vanderbilt. Delightful shop, very clever use of space. Imaginative gifts including toys. Give yourself a treat, say hello.

AI LOV IU Art Gallery, 85 Fort Greene Place, just off Fulton. (Stained glass "85" at entrance) Owners Gigi Scandinaro, Mariana Redgell, Jorge Boetto. Sat & Sun 12-6pm or by appointment. Elegantly quiet space. They will focus on Brooklyn artists and in the future present various disciplines - poetry, music & more. Welcome this addition to our creative community. 718 673-0706.

We wish these recent business arrivals great success and happy times in Fort Greene.

Visit them all!

GOOD ORGANIZATIONS, DOING GOOD WORK

Fort Greene Snap
Grandparent caregiver support, computer training, tutoring • Dr. Elizabeth Glose • 718-694-6957 • Fortgreensnap.org

Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church
Various community outreach, housing, jobs, homelessness • Reverend David Dyson • 718-625-7515 • 85 So Oxford, 11217 • lapcbrooklyn.org

Pratt Area Community Counsel
Housing Advocacy • Deb Howard, Exec Dir. • Andersen Fils-Aime • Lead Community Organizer • 201 Dekalb, Brooklyn, 11205 718-522-2613. prattarea.org

Ryan Mack - All About Business
Financial literacy, job application and interview skills • 718-623-3423 • ryanmack@yaboo.com, ryanmack@optimuminstitute.org

The Fort Greene Association
Green Fort Greene/Clinton Hill
718-875-1855 • Historicfortgreene.org

The Fort Greene Park Conservancy
718-222-1461 • Fortgreenepark.org

Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership
Small business revitalization and support • Blaise Backer, Jennifer Stokes • 718-230-1689 • Myrtleavenue.org

Tillary Park Foundation Inc., Tillary Park Hoops
Basketball, health screenings, field trips for elders • Darryl Barlow • 917-440-3247 • fax: 718-522-3134

The Brooklyn Pitbulls
Pop Warner Football League, Girls Soccer Team • Lloyd Rodriguez, Lisa Steadwell • 718-756-2194 • Brooklynpitbulls@msn.com

Community Counseling and Mediation
Youth outreach, academic support • Shalawn Langhorne • 718-246-2109 • Ccm197@aol.com

The Fort Greene Association Bi-Annual House Tour: Sunday, May 4th 12-5pm.

Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 the day of the tour.

For more information visit historicfortgreene.org or email: ursulabeg@yaboo.com

Save the Date!

“ I sold my home through
Roslyn Huebener! ”

What you'll hear from more and more Fort Greene owners.

Roslyn Huebener is proud to underwrite this issue of the Fort Greene Newsletter

Roslyn Huebener knows Fort Greene and Clinton Hill like no one else. With over 25 years experience she has a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of real estate transactions, and has the charm and wit to handle any complications with intelligence, diplomacy, and grace.

If you're thinking of selling your house, co-op or condo, and want the marketing and sale of your property handled both smoothly and professionally . . .

Call Roslyn at 718 788-8200 x11

E-mail her at: roslyn@ahrly.com



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