



# FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN

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



## Evening Reflections

### Prison Ship Martyrs Monument Fort Greene Park

Painting by Joan Reutershan, 2008. Oil on canvas, 20" x 20"

## The Centennial Issue

On November 15, 2008 the Prison Ship Martyrs Memorial Celebration takes place in Fort Greene Park. Learn all about the event inside.



# FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN

WINTER 2008

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

**Richard Norton**

Acting-Chair

**Joan Bassin**

Treasurer

**Susan Butler**

Corresponding Secretary

**Fred Lasker**

Recording Secretary

## MEMBERS AT LARGE

Naomi Dickerson

Ruth Goldstein

dorris gains golomb

Joseph Gutleber

Roslyn Huebener

Mary Priebe

## ALTERNATES

Selma Jackson

Jed Marcus

Paul Palazzo

## GNARLY VINES

is proud to underwrite this issue of the Fort Greene Association newsletter.

## NEXT FGA MEETING:

Monday, Nov. 17, 2008

at 7:30 pm

Light refreshments

at 7.00 pm

## TOPIC: Energy and the Environment

Several green perspectives will be presented by leading environmental spokespersons. Q&A will follow.

## LOCATION:

Lafayette Avenue

Presbyterian Church,

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.*

## CREDITS:

### EDITOR

Naomi Dickerson

### DESIGN

Abby Weissman

## Notes from the Acting-Chair, Richard Norton

To my Fort Greene Neighbors,

The Fort Greene Association has had a challenging but productive year, due in part to past efforts. While FGA has experienced over the past few years, several leadership changes, and will do so again January 1st when a newly elected Chair takes office, all recent FGA Chairs have taken important leadership roles in efforts that remain viable. These include Howard Pitsch's long-term dedication and work to extend the Ft. Greene Historic District; Phillip Kellogg's successful drive to rezone our community to prevent non-contextual development; and Ursula Hegewisch's efforts to extend FGA participation to every part of our community.

FGA has been active this year in several areas. We continue to work with the Historic District Council to expand the Historic District and recently to save Admiral's Row. We continue to support DDDDB. We have been working with Community Board 2 and local politicians to assure Downtown Brooklyn Partnership's developments are in the interest of Fort Greene residents, and with Community Board 2, Clinton Hill Society and several Tenant Associations south of Myrtle Avenue to create a new Public Safety Task Force. We have supported other volunteer organizations such as the Retail Subcommittee to encourage local businesses and the Fort Greene Park Conservancy by making contributions and acting as "umbrella." We hold meetings every three months to keep our members and public at large informed and to allow all neighbors a platform to exchange information.

It has been gratifying to be your Acting Chair for these six months, and I look forward to working with your new Chair when I expect to return in January to my previous position as Vice-Chair. Many exciting challenges are before FGA membership and I invite all Ft. Greene residents and/or local business people to join us.

- Richard A. Norton, Acting Chair

## Comments From Prospective Chair

**Paul Palazzo**

As I passed through the fallen leaves along Vanderbilt Avenue, the scent of Autumn hit me and a wave of excitement passed over me just about as fast as the temperature change. Wasn't it last week when I was sweating bullets wishing for that cool crisp air?

As if my personal longing has been suddenly granted it was Fall with all the thrill that the season brings. Maybe it is the remembrance of a much earlier Halloween and a Green Hornet costume I was very fond of, wax lips, candy corn, dunking for apples, jumping into piles of leaves, but I love this season. Maybe it is the child in me that knows as if by instinct that Halloween leads to Thanksgiving and that Thanksgiving leads to Christmas.

Christmas! You mean it's the end of the year already?

Fall. It's time to take a deep breath, roll up your sleeves, and get to work. There is so much to be done. Is everyone accounted for? Family? - check...Friends? - check...Neighborhood? - What about my neighborhood?

Yes the beginning of Autumn does seem to initiate the rush to the end of the year. With the scent of those leaves still fresh in the air take time to reflect upon all the things that need to be done including the needs of the Neighborhood. If you can find the time, volunteer. The Neighborhood always needs volunteers. If you're pressed for time then there are other ways to give. Even a simple gesture like saying "Hello" to your neighbor on the street is a way of giving to your Neighborhood.

So breathe, roll up those sleeves, and after you've completed that checklist we'll see you at the FGA Holiday Party.



## The PUBLIC SAFETY Task Force Is Born

By Alfred Chiodo

Suzanne Debrango, a resident of Clinton Hill and member of the Society for Clinton Hill, had grown concerned about rising crime in her neighborhood after seeing a post on *brownstoner.com* about groups of teens mugging people in the neighborhood. "I have lived in Clinton Hill for a little over 9 years and recently noticed that crime seemed to be escalating," she recalls, and began to hear of more incidents involving teens, including assaults.

For Dave Haberer, it was at last year's Clinton Hill Halloween Walk

when he started to notice a change in the neighborhood. "We had 4,000 kids on the street and [what seemed like] no police presence." He talked to his neighbor Suzanne, and others, and began to see a pattern. Dave knew that if he met with the



Tish James with DA Charles Hynes at the Town Hall meeting.

police they would need more information, and that many people failed to report certain crimes such as car break-ins. The idea of an internet-based mapping tool, or "crime map," came up, and Dave's friend Sonny, working with Dustin Lucien, created an internet site where residents can self-report crimes. (Go to [societyforclintonhill.org](http://societyforclintonhill.org) to find out more.) Armed with the start of a plan, Suzanne and Dave called Council Member Letitia James, knowing she would not only understand, but would do something about it.

After an initial meeting with Tish, the Fort Greene & Clinton Hill Public Safety Task Force was formed. With Council Member James' guidance, other concerned and active residents were asked to join, creating a working group that reflects the diversity of the two neighborhoods. Meetings followed, which included Pratt Institute and St. Joseph's College, resulting in commitments from those schools to expand their public safety roles in the area. The Task Force then met with Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes and the new Commanding Officer of the 88th Precinct, Captain James Tasso.

The work culminated in the recent town hall meeting on October 15th, where the audience answered a Task Force survey on crime and Council Member James moderated and introduced the speakers - DA Hynes; CO Tasso; Deputy Inspector Alan Abel from the 84th Precinct; and Capt. Brian McGinn from PSA3 (NYPD unit overseeing public housing in this section of Brooklyn). A question and answer period followed, and Letitia James announced a challenge to local businesses to hire local youths, citing Thierry, owner of Choice Market, a business owner who has hired many local youths.

This is a first step, and more work needs to be done. Council Member James explained, "The task force is about forging better relations between law enforcement and the public. We all need to make sure we are doing our part to prevent and to fight crime, as well as report to the Police Department or District Attorney every single case of criminal activity."

To find out more about the Task Force, contact Suzanne Debrango ([sbegrango@msn.com](mailto:sbegrango@msn.com)) or Alfred A. Chiodo in Council Member James' office ([achiodo@council.nyc.gov](mailto:achiodo@council.nyc.gov)).

# The Prison Ship Martyrs Memorial Centennial Celebration

## Patricia Hampl's Revolutionary War Text "Brooklyn Bones" Has Powerful Contemporary Resonance

In her *Notes on Writing the Text for "Brooklyn Bones,"* the text to be heard in the performance to celebrate the revolutionary war martyrs monument (see calendar), Hampl explains how she retrieves the story of the thousands of boys and men from the thirteen colonies and across the globe who were imprisoned on war ships in Wallabout Bay and whose bones had washed ashore for years after the Revolutionary War.

The title reflects the fact that these bones, referred to by Walt Whitman and others, were the only evidence of the sacrifice of real lives. Hampl writes: *"These men and boys of diverse nationalities, buddled together on old British war ships...form a kind of proto-Statue of Liberty; an image of the solidarity and pluralism that was to be and remains the most dynamic American demographic and cultural fact."*

**Brooklyn Bones: Requiem for the Revolutionary War Prison Ship Martyrs** was commissioned by the Fort Greene Park Conservancy. Music by Alvin Singleton.

## Charles Jarden, Chair of the Fort Greene Park Conservancy to Give Re-dedication Address

On behalf of the Conservancy and the Centennial Committee, Charles Jarden, Fort Greene Park Conservancy Chair, will give a re-dedication address for the Prison Ship Martyrs' Ceremonies on November 15. He will talk about Fort Greene Park's history, the significance of the relighting of the eternal flame atop the stone pillar, and the importance of a re-commitment to ideals contained in the Declaration of Independence.

## Schedule of Centennial Weekend Events

Come be a part of history and honor our country as we re-dedicate and re-light the monument, which has been dark for over seventy years!

### November 14, 2008 – Kick-Off Reception at MoCADA, 80 Hanson Place

**5:30-7:30 PM** Prize-winning art works inspired by the experiences of the British Prison Ship Martyrs during the American Revolution, created by neighborhood high school students; free, refreshments.

### November 15, 2008 – Full Day of Free Spectacular Activities in Fort Greene Park

**10:00 AM** To reserve for limited space events, sign-up sheets will be available in the Visitors' Center.

**11:00 AM** NYC Department of Parks and Recreation unveiling of the Monument eagles.

**Noon – 3:45 PM Visitors Center:** Family Roots Project: Explore your family's roots, free genealogical workshops and assistance with individual searches conducted by professionals from the African Atlantic Genealogical Society; Entertainment stage: Jazz by *Jeff Newell's New Trad* and Wade Barnes' *Brooklyn Four plus One*, Brooklyn High School of the Arts band, performers from Irondale Theater; \* Guided bus tours of the Brooklyn Navy Yard; Revolutionary war re-enactors; activities for families – meet Mr. Walt Whitman; Ranger-led tours of the park; \*a horse and buggy will be available for family fun and to provide transport for people in need of help to reach the Monument Plaza.

\*Limited space events

**3:15 PM** Fife and drum led procession and parade of flags from South Oxford Park to Fort Greene Park Monument Plaza for the beginning of the formal tribute.

**3:30 – 3:45 PM** Monument stairs: Flag-posting ceremony

**4:15 PM** Formal commemoration: U.S. National Anthem sung by Tony Award winner Cady Huffman; keynote address by Dr. Edwin G. Burrows, the 1999 Pulitzer Prize winner and author of recently released *"Forgotten Patriots: The Untold Story of American Prisoners During the Revolutionary War;"* 21- gun salute; wreath-laying; color guards; solemn military pageantry and much much more!

**5:00 PM** Re-lighting the Eternal Flame of the Prison Ship Martyrs for the first time since 1921, and the return of our eagles after a four-decade struggle by undaunted Fort Greeners.

**5:30 – 7:30 PM** Reception: Brooklyn Technical High School, 29 South Elliott Place immediately following the re-dedication of the Monument and the re-lighting of the eternal flame, in the fabulous Art Deco lobby of the school. Food provided by the chef/owner of the restaurant Eletteria, Akhtar Nawab, former sous-chef for Tom Colicchio at Craft. Entertainment will be provided by noted cabaret singer, Victoria England. For this reception there is a charge of \$25, which must be paid in advance. For reservations call Ruth Goldstein at 718.596.0899.

**7:30 PM** Free Concert: Brooklyn Technical High School Auditorium, 29 South Elliott Place. World Premier of *"Brooklyn Bones: Requiem for the Prison Ship Martyrs"* by composer Alvin Singleton, text by Patricia Hampl, commissioned by the Fort Greene Park Conservancy to commemorate the Centennial. It is a work for chorus, orchestra and solo tenor.

## Fort Greene Park Conservancy: a Triumph of Community Organizing By Ruth Goldstein

### Re-lighting the Eternal Flame. Return of the Eagles. Public Opening of the Visitors Center. How did it happen?

On November 15, 2008, in Fort Greene Park the community will celebrate these triumphs.

The eternal flame was dark for more than 71 years, the eagles gone for more than 40, and the visitor center was closed to the public for more than 3 decades. The radical turn-around that re-lights the flame, returns the eagles, and opens the center occurred because of the strong community advocacy of the Fort Greene Park Conservancy.

The Conservancy began in 1994 as The Fort Greene Gardeners, a committee of the Fort Greene Association, embracing as its missions, remembrance of the Martyrs and the restoration and maintenance of the Park. By 1999 it emerged as the Fort Greene Park Con-

servancy. To this day many of the Conservancy Board's strongest members are also members of the FGA board and it has been a goal of those members to mutually strengthen both organizations.

The Conservancy remains an all volunteer organization. Any funds it raises go directly into the Park. Among other responsibilities, the Conservancy must raise

\$8,000 for its full-time Park Department Manager who supervises the welfare-to-work staff that rakes, waters, and maintains the park. But this is just part of what the Conservancy does. The beautiful new benches that are being installed, the Halloween Festival, educational programming, the Film series, all are Conservancy projects. The list is long.

on behalf of a very united and caring community.

The Centennial culminates the first community effort to reclaim the park, but it is only a beginning. The Conservancy reaches out to you for support. You strengthen our advocacy and provide the resources to continue our work. We invite you to join with us. For more information contact Ruth Goldstein: 718-596-0899 or at [ruthfgp.org@att.net](mailto:ruthfgp.org@att.net).



Left: The Monument with bronze urn.  
Above: Fort Greene Park's Visitor's Center.  
Photos by Carey Kirkella.



# FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN

## Next FGA Meeting: Monday November 17, 2008 @ 7:30 pm

Light Refreshments @ 7pm.

Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 S. Oxford Street (corner of S. Oxford & Lafayette Ave.)

Meeting Room, entrance on S. Oxford Street

## TOPIC: Energy and the Environment

If you own or rent, learn as experts present ways to contain rising energy costs. Several green perspectives will be presented by leading environmental spokespersons. Q&A will follow.

Box 170563, Brooklyn NY 11217-0563

Pre-Sorted  
First Class  
US Postage  
PAID  
Brooklyn NY  
Permit #84

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.

**GNARLY VINES** is proud to underwrite this issue of the Fort Greene Association newsletter.

**NEXT MEETING:**  
Mon. Nov. 17, 2008  
at 7:30 pm  
**TOPIC: Energy & the Environment**  
**LOCATION:**  
Lafayette Ave  
Presbyterian Church,  
85 S. Oxford St.

### NEWSCENES

#### COMESTIBLES:

**NO. 7** 7 Greene Avenue (at Fulton St). Hours: Tue to Sun, 6 pm til midnight. Bar menu til 2 am. With imagination, hard work and style, this long-neglected space has become a light, bright, inviting restaurant. Clerestory windows, a skylight above the dining room, and a cozy banquet area near the bar create a warm delightful environment. More than matching the pleasure of being there is Chef Tyler Kord's sophisticated, imaginative menu. Visit soon, give yourself a treat and wish them success. 718 522-6370

**ANIMA** 458 Myrtle Avenue. Hours: Mon-Thurs noon-11pm / Fri & Sat noon to midnight / Sun 10-10. Italian Bistro "feed your soul" Brunch/Lunch/Dinner Extensive menu. Inviting, comfortable dining room - glass panels opening to the street - adjoining pleasant bar area. Have a look and a taste, bid them good luck. 718 422-1122.

*We'll soon be welcoming another ethnic cuisine - Turkish. At the corner of S. Elliott (former "Little India"). Keep your eyes peeled.*

#### SHOPPING:

**WALGREENS** On Myrtle Avenue before long there will be, in a new apartment building, a Walgreens drug store. Look for the red awnings. Opening is imminent.

*Please do as much of your HOLIDAY SHOPPING as you can right here in Fort Greene. There's great variety - fashion, food, delightful accessories for home and much more. Have fun exploring our merchant neighbor's offerings. Make your life simpler as well. Shop early. Some shops, if you ask, can provide gift certificates, an easy way to take care of your entire list. We need to spend our money in our own community - especially this year. It will be to everyone's advantage. Simple or expansive, you will find it in Fort Greene.*

### NEW BABY:

Baby Daughter Tavia Mary Seitz was born July 13, 2008 in Boston, Mass., weighing 7 lbs, 3 oz. Tavia and her parents, Brenna Moore and John Seitz, moved to Fort Greene in August 2008. They are now our neighbors on Lafayette Avenue. We wish all the family much joy!

### WEDDING:

Warm CONGRATULATIONS to long time neighbors Joseph Gutleber and Dr. Scott Emmons on their marriage August 25, 2008 in San Rafael, Marin County Cal. at the Civic Center designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. They are at home now in their beautiful brownstone. They have been wonderful community activists, giving much to Fort Greene. We wish them a future filled with happiness!

We invite you to submit items for NEWSCENES, inclusion by the editor's decision. For any mistakes herein, we apologize.

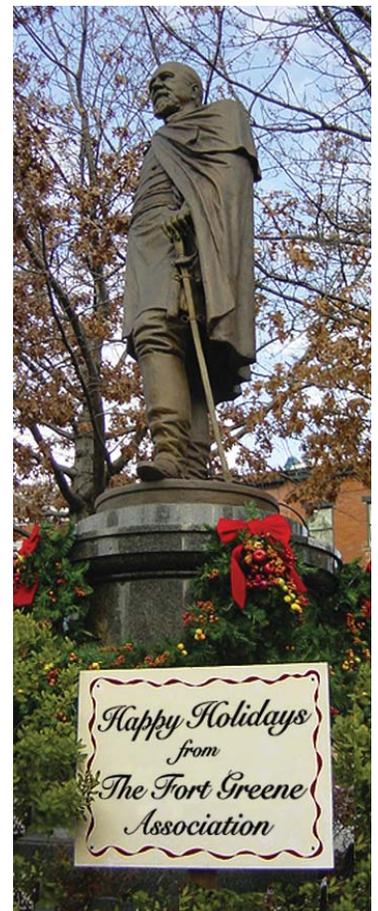
### EVENTS:

#### SAVE THE DATE

The Fort Greene Association Holiday Party will be held on Friday December 5, 2008. Location still being finalized. Check the website for more information when it becomes available.

#### SPECIAL HOLIDAY DECORATING EVENT AT FOWLER'S SQUARE →

On November 22, 2008 you are invited to help us decorate Fowler's Square. The Square is the small triangular park with the statue of General Fowler - located on South Elliot where Fulton crosses Lafayette. The festivities begin at 5:30 PM. Enjoy light seasonal refreshments and hear some special local musicians. Mark your calendars, spread the word, this is **not to be missed!!** Supported by Tish James and the Fulton Street Bid Merchants.





**VGNARLY  
VINES**  
wine & spirits

350 Myrtle Ave Brooklyn, NY 11205 (btw Carlton & Adelphi) 718.797.3183

Free same night local delivery in Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Bed-Stuy  
and most surrounding neighborhoods (\$20 min)

To be notified of in-store tastings and events, sign up at  
[www.gnarlyvines.com](http://www.gnarlyvines.com)

Gnarly Vines is proud to support the Fort Greene Association  
and celebrate our 1st Anniversary in the neighborhood.  
Thank you for your support.



*the best wines come from gnarly vines*