



Bedford • Barrow • Commerce

Block Association
46 Barrow Street • New York, NY 10014

BBC News and Views December 2009

There will be **no December meeting**. Instead, come to:

**The Bedford Barrow Commerce
Block Association 2009 Holiday Party**
When: Saturday, December 12, 6-9 PM
**Where: Greenwich House Music School,
46 Barrow St., Auditorium**
Price: Adults, \$10; Children (under 12), \$5
Food, Fun, Fellowship — Greenwich Village Style

- ✱ **Buffet Dinner.** Fresh cold cuts, Bill's famous baked beans, scrumptious salads, and succulent sweet treats are the fare. Don't miss Dora's cookies and pies! Drinks — juice, wine, and fresh-brewed coffee — are provided. Home-baked goods are welcome; bring them with you or drop them off at the School at 4 PM on Party Day.
- ✱ **AL. E. Gator & Friends Puppet Theatre** presents puppets, puppets, and more puppets — for children of all ages!
- ✱ Special visit by **Santa Claus**. Santa is dropping in early this year to give every boy and girl a holiday treat. Ho, Ho, Ho! Santa has many prizes to give away to Raffle Winners!
- ✱ **Holiday Sing-Along**, with all your holiday favorites. Elves wanted to trim tree and help decorate! Report to Mrs. Claus at the Music School at 4 PM on Party Day.

A BBC Holiday Tradition

BBCer **Dale Belli** has asked the BBC to ask our members who knit and crochet to make their creations for the PWA Christmas Project. This great organization works with more than 40 hospitals and hospices to deliver what for many PWAs is the sole holiday gift that they receive. Especially needed are hand-crocheted/knitted throws, blankets, scarves; thermal

long johns; flannel pajamas; sweatshirts; sweatpants; sweaters; socks; and stuffed animals. T-shirts, gloves, winter caps/hats are also needed. Gifts must be new and unwrapped, but gift boxes are appreciated (appropriately sized to the gift). Gifts are needed for both men and women, but men's gifts are most welcome — there is a 3 to 1 ration of men to women; in many places, the ratio is 4 to 1. Thank you all, as always, for your generosity and holiday spirit!

Deck the Halls (and the Lampposts!)

Look for the pine garlands (the first week of December) with red velvet ribbons festooning our neighborhood's Bishop's Crook lampposts. Thanks to the BBC, whose generosity (and several very agile elves) will again help to make the season more festive.

Nabe Notes

For the movies buffs in our neighborhood, look for a scene from *New York I Love You* starring **Robin Wright (formerly Penn)** and **Chris Cooper** that was filmed in our own Commerce Restaurant. According to owner **Tony Zuzula**, it was an extensive interior shoot.

The Cherry Lane Theatre has extended *The Lady with All the Answers* through December 20 (starring **Judith Ivey**). As reported by *Curtain Up* "Hilariously funny...Ivey reincarnates (Landers) with snap, crackle, and charm." Thurs. - Sat. at 8PM, Sundays at 3PM. Call 212.947.8844 or visit the Cherry Lane Box Office.

Also, through December 13, in the small theatre at the Cherry Lane is *How to Be a Good Italian Daughter (In Spite of Myself)* written and performed by **Antonette LaVecchia**. "LaVecchia is stellar" *Curtain Up*. Thurs.-Friday 7PM, Saturday at 3PM & 7PM Sunday at 2PM. (no performance Saturday-Dec. 5 at 3PM, Sat.-Dec. 12 at 3pm. May be inappropriate for children 13 and under; no children under 4.

You are invited to join Cherry Lane Theatre as they announce their 2010 Mentor Project participants. Hear from the Mentors (**Charles Fuller, David Henry Hwang, and Craig Lucas**) and the Fellows, as well as excerpts from the plays; help celebrate the 12th Anniversary of this award-winning program. Mon., Dec. 7., 7PM, free of charge.

RSVP to reserve your seat 212.989.2020 x21 or info@cherry-lanetheatre.org.

The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, as part of their on-going Authors of Greenwich Village series, presents *New York's Unique & Unexpected Places* by **Judith Stonehill**. The author talks about her new book written for urban ramblers who want to explore the city's fascinating, but less familiar sites. Wed., December 9, 6:30-8:00PM (doors open at 6:15PM), Jefferson Market Library, free of charge, reservations required. RSVP to rsvp@gvshp.org or 212.475.9585 x35

The Village Visiting Neighbors needs Elves to visit and deliver gifts starting December 7 to homebound senior citizens during December. Gifts can be picked up on most afternoons and evenings throughout the month. Visiting Neighbors is located at 611 Broadway, Suite 510 (between Bleecker and Houston Sts.) Please call **Howie Square** at 212.260.6200 for specific times and dates.

The Historic Districts Council Monday Morning Coffee Talk with **Karen Ansis**, Dec. 7, 8:30AM (Neighborhood Preservation Center 232 East 11th Street). Maintaining and restoring historic buildings is critical to preserve our neighborhoods. Learn about the various financial and project management assistance programs available through The New York Landmarks Conservancy to assist individuals, businesses and non-profits in this effort. This event is free and open to the public. Reservations are required, as space is limited. RSVP ftolbert@hdc.org.

If you wish to make a living holiday gift donation in the name of someone dear to you to the Jefferson Market Garden for the support of the plants and trees, they will mail a handwritten holiday card to the recipient of your choice to convey your greeting and thoughtfulness. Please send the recipient's name and address by December 12 with your tax deductible contribution to Jefferson Market Garden, 70A Greenwich Ave., PMB 372, 10011. Become a JMG Godparent. For a donation of \$500 or more, you can join the JMG Godparent, whose gifts support a summer aide each year. You will receive the garden book of the year, *Planthropology*, by **Ken Druse**, with custom bookplate, courtesy of Clarkson Potter/Publishers.

Greenwich House Pottery School (Jane Hartsook Gallery, 16 Jones Street) Resident Artist Exhibition Dec. 3-20 call 212.242.4106 or pottery@greenwichhousepottery.org for details.

Greenwich House Music School (46 Barrow St.), Renee Weiler Concert Hall, Jazz Vocal Workshop free performance, December 15, 7PM.

Judson Memorial Church (Ecumenical) (55 Washington Square S. — betw. Sullivan & Thompson) 40th Anniversary of Al Carmine's musical extravaganza Fri., Dec. 4, 8 PM, Sat., Dec. 19, 11AM.

2009 GUIDE TO HOLIDAY HAPPENING

Community Board 2 invites you to the 2009 **Holiday and Toy Drive**, Wed, December 9, 6PM – 8:00PM, (S.P.Q.R. Restaurant, 133 Mulberry Street), tickets \$30. They will collect toys for *Marine Toys for Tots* of NYC. Please bring a new, unopened children's toy with you to the event. Light buffet, glass of wine or beer is included. Tickets must be purchased at the door. If paying by check, please make check payable to the restaurant. RSVP to Community Board 2 212.979.2272 or gormley@cb2manhattan.org.

Caroling Walk with the West Village Chorale (meet at St. Luke's, 487 Hudson). Fri., Dec. 18, 7PM: Christmas Caroling through the Village, led by members of the West Village Chorale. FREE for the whole family! www.westvillagechorale.org for details.

Washington Square Park Tree and Menorah Lighting Thurs. Dec. 10 at 6:00PM: Gather at the Washington Square Arch for the annual lighting of the Christmas tree. Sing along to Christmas carols with the **Rob Susman Brass Quartet** and await a special visit from Santa!

Winter Choral Concert, Tues. Dec. 8, 8 PM to 10PM: (Frederick Loewe Theatre, 35 West 4th Street) Winter-inspired choral music and holiday songs will be performed by the NYU Choral Arts Society, University Singers, Women's Choir, Jazz Choir, Madrigal Choir, Gospel, and others free.

West Village Chorale (212.571.1776), St. Luke in the Fields, 487 Hudson St. Mon. Dec. 14, 7:30PM: Messiah Sing. An audience sing of Handel's Messiah. (\$12/general; \$10/seniors, students).

Christmas Eve Caroling in Washington Square Park. Thurs. Dec. 24 at 5PM: Meet at the Arch in Washington Square Park for caroling on Christmas Eve! The Rob Susman Brass Quartet will lead revelers in singing holiday favorites. Free songbooks will be distributed, compliments of the Washington Square Association.

St. Luke in the Fields Christmas Activities (Episcopal) (212.989.0562) (487 Hudson St.) Thurs., Dec. 24, 5PM: Christmas Pageant, Thurs., Dec. 24, 10PM: Christmas Music by the St. Luke's Choir; 10:30 pm: Christmas Vigil, Fri., Dec. 25, 10:30AM: Christmas Morning Mass

Our Lady of Pompeii Christmas Activities (25 Carmine St.) 212.989.6805, Thurs., Dec. 24, 5PM: Vigil Mass; 12 AM, Midnight Mass, Fri., Dec. 25, 9AM: Mass; 11AM: Mass; 12:15: Mass.



Neighborhood Notes & Notables

When you next visit Target you may notice a local name. Longtime West 11th Street resident, **Carlos Falchi**, a Brazilian who got his start dressing rockers and jazzmen in 1970s Greenwich Village, designs high end leather goods. Target called upon him to design a line of bags that will be available for two months starting on November 1. Falchi is a craftsman, one of the last makers of leather goods in New York. He employs about 60 people on three floors of the building on West 39th where he makes bags for stores like Bergdorf Goodman and Saks.

The internet was abuzz with a video of actor **James Gandolfini** menacing a *Guest of a Guest* photographer who was videotaping him on Halloween on Hudson Street. Evidently, Mr. Gandolfini was trick-or-treating with his son and ex-wife and took issue with the video paparazzi, who was standing about thirty feet away from him, but probably was a nuisance. Gandolfini's ex-wife can be heard telling the photographer to get away from her son, who was trick-or-treating.

The Beatrice Inn shut down earlier this year after neighbors had enough of the A-list crowd partying it up at all hours is rumored to be re-opening. Meanwhile, someone who is working with own **Paul Seigny** on getting his club back in business told Gawker, "He's still fighting... if it reopens, Beatrice won't be the same because of the neighbors, so that plan is to move the controversial party downtown to a space that does not have the same sound issues." Well, if the unruly crowds don't reappear, the neighbors should be OK with that.

The late floral designer **Robert Isabell** amassed a treasure trove of mid-20th-century furniture and sculpture in his house at 16 Minetta Lane. He orchestrated events like the funeral of **Andy Warhol** and the wedding of **Caroline Kennedy**. His possessions will be auctioned at Sotheby's on Dec. 17 (and will be on display beginning Dec. 12). The 128 lots include a tabletop forest of mushroom-shaped lamps from the 1970s and a 1952 pine-and-lacquered-metal bookcase. When Mr. Isabell



acquired his house in 1990, it was divided into six apartments. He bought it from **Swen Swenson**, a dancer known for his striptease in the 1962 musical "Little Me," who used it as a headquarters to raise bail for protesters arrested during the Stonewall riots.

The most visually arresting room may have been the stone-floored basement of the carriage house where a hulking walnut bar with green-painted doors was paired with a sleek oak-and-aluminum sideboard. They are surrounded by biomorphic sculptures in phosphorous bronze. The pièce de résistance was the "Nickel Couch," a metal confection by **Johnny Swing**, who spent three months welding thousands of nickels onto a patinated metal frame. The principal beneficiary is the Oak Spring Garden Foundation, a charity for botanical studies founded by **Bunny Mellon**, the 99-year-old Listerine heiress and philanthropist, who was Mr. Isabell's closest friend. *The New York Times, Nov. 20*

Resources & Information

Doctors at St. Vincent's Hospital exposed a Washington Heights woman to the HIV virus when they used dirty medical equipment, a lawsuit alleges. After **Milvia Lopez** was discharged following an echocardiogram — which renders a two-dimensional image of the heart — she received an urgent phone call asking her to return. The hospital sent her a limo to pick her up, according to *the Daily News*. She claims doctors told her that they inserted an unsterilized scope down her throat and that she had been exposed to the HIV virus as well as hepatitis B and C. Doctors prescribed her with medicine to treat her exposure and antibiotics to fight off other bacteria, and instructed her to monitor her blood for infection. She claims she suffered psychological and emotional trauma, lost her hair during HIV treatment, and felt confined to her home in shame. According to the suit, St. Vincent's "engaged in a coverup which included the withholding of relevant medical records." *Gothamist*

On November 4 the Municipal Art Society and the New York Landmarks Conservancy, joined by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, the Preservation League of the State of New York, the Brooklyn Heights Association and the Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts yesterday submitted to the court a "Friends of the Court" brief supporting the position taken in Protect the Village Historic District's lawsuit against the LPC's approval of the demolition of the O'Toole Building.

LPC had originally found that Curran/O'Toole should be preserved for its architectural and historic value — it was

built as the headquarters of the National Maritime Union), but subsequently authorized demolition on the grounds of “hardship.” The brief argues that LPC applied the wrong test in authorizing the demolition of the Curran/O’Toole Building and “invented” an unsupportable rationale to justify its decision. It concludes that if the LPC decision were upheld, it would set a precedent that could undermine New York City’s Landmarks Preservation law and, by extension, similar laws across the country.

“By applying a test much more lenient than the courts have sanctioned, and inventing a campus-based exception to the Landmarks Law, the LPC has upset the finely tuned balance the law strikes between the rights and needs of non-profit property owners and the values of historic preservation....the LPC’s reasoning opens the door – far more than the Constitution requires – for non-profit owners of landmarks and buildings within historic districts to circumvent the requirements of the Landmarks Law.”

The 49 page brief details the history of the City’s landmarks law, the important decisions that have interpreted and upheld it (including the famous case the preserved Grand Central Terminal) and the important defects and errors of the LPC’s decision to allow the demolition of the Curran/O’Toole Building.

The Colquitt County High School Choir will give a free concert on Sat., December 5, 2009 at 5PM. at the Seventh Day Adventist Church (232 W. 11th Street) Two choirs are part of the same group. Their repertoire includes: *Gloria* by Rickards, *There Shall A Star* by Mendelssohn, *Tannebaum* by Earlene Rentz, *Fanfare for Christmas* by Kirby Shaw. The church was originally a Baptist Church, heavily funded by the **Rockefellers**. The stained glass windows are thought to be by Tiffany Studios.

The 2005 **rezoning of the Far West Village** did not include the C6-1 district between Greenwich and Washington Streets and West 12th and West 10th Streets, covering all or part of these six city blocks. After inappropriate development plans for sites within the neighborhood were proposed, Community Board 2 and local community groups renewed calls for rezoning of this area. The Department of City Planning has determined that a rezoning is warranted and that a C1-6A district is appropriate. DCP will begin the process of conducting an environmental assessment prior to the initiation of public hearings.

The New York Times (Nov. 15) published a piece by **Christopher Gray** on the early renovations of some historic brownstones and why current renovations back to the original form may be a debatable effort. The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation partially based its argument for the preservation of the Provincetown Playhouse on the view that its 1940s renovation was worth preserving. Gray cites

The Row House Reborn: Architecture and Neighborhoods in New York City, 1908-1929 by **Andrew S. Dolkart**, who is involved in the effort to achieve landmarks status for the South Village. “...many pre-restoration brownstones are a whole new building type....Stoops started coming off brownstones in the 1890s, when a few adventurous souls took a sledgehammer to them... (One) lively facade went up in 1928 on an old tenement at 11 Cornelia Street. The architect, **James H. Galoway**... refaced the lower section with yellow stucco and



tile decoration. The stucco facade is dotted with low relief molds of galleons, Venetian gondolas, parrots and other images. He installed a metal plaque in the shape of an artist’s palette bearing the name Seville Studios. In 1928, *The New York Times* carried an advertisement promising “Old World atmosphere, New World conveniences,” including beamed ceilings, gas ranges, tiled baths and a rear garden with a fountain.” The online piece includes a slide show.

Frustrated by the inability to speak to an actual person when trying to solve a problem via telephone? www.gethuman.com lists how to speak to a human being, instead of a series of recorded messages, at almost 1500 companies.

Pro Piano, longtimer supplier of Steinway pianos to concert pianists out of an office and warehouse at 85-89 Jane Street has its buildings on the market. The business began 1969 on the West Coast. The East Coast branch opened in 1979. A few years ago, The Related Group inquired about renting the Pro Piano space as a showroom for the Superior Ink development. Pro Piano moved out.

Then, across the street **Albert Watson**, a fashion and commercial photographer, put his home and studio on the market for \$35 million. Early last year, **Noam Gottesman**, a hedge fund manager, paid \$34 million, and with the approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, tore the structure down. He is building a three-story home.

When Pro Piano acquired the buildings in 1985, they housed an ice cream factory. According to the records, one building was put up in the mid-19th century on the site of a stoneyard, and has been repeatedly altered since. The other began in 1919 as a one-story garage.