



Bedford • Barrow • Commerce

Block Association
46 Barrow Street • New York, NY 10014

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP IS (ONLY) \$15
FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL 212.366.1451.

BBC NEWS AND VIEWS

February Meeting
There is NO February meeting.

BBC Membership — BBC **President Kathy Donaldson** reports that 178 have already rejoined the Bedford Barrow Commerce Block Association. Thanks to those of you who have re-upped! You will find your new membership card in this mailing. Those of you who haven't yet rejoined will find a return envelope for to you to send in your payment (and please do remember those trees!). Be sure to make your checks payable to BBC Membership. You'll feel great — guaranteed!!

A Celebrated Patriot of the American Revolution — BBCer and Chair of our Neighborhood History Committee **Bob Oliver** writes: "I'm one of those neighbors who have often asked themselves the question, 'I wonder who was the most 'important' person ever to live in our neighborhood?' (If you have a candidate, we'd love to hear from you; just give Bob Oliver a call at 212-675-4264.) It's not an easy question. English-speaking people have been living here for over 300 years." Bob's candidate is **Tom Paine**, a founding father of our country, philosopher, author and revolutionary, and sadly, almost an "unknown," even in this neighborhood, his own!

Paine died around the corner at 57 Grove Street in 1809. In 1927, the Greenwich Historical Society proposed the dedication of a plaque at the site. A celebration was prepared and governmental officials were invited to the dedication. From **President Warren Harding** down, all refused the invitation. Twenty-five years earlier, **President Theodore Roosevelt** had called Paine, "that goddamned atheist." When he died, only six people attended his funeral and the church refused the request for burial in "consecrated ground."

In our next edition, you'll hear more about Bob's choice and the fascinating story of our neighbor, Tom Paine. Who's YOUR candidate?

Larry Myers' Latest! — BBCer and celebrated playwright *Dr. Larry Myers' plays, Mary Anderson's Encove and Twitter Theater*, have been published by 3 Rooms Press. Myers' Memo from **Allen Ginsburg** is being produced at the Howl Festival. And Dr. Myers is currently serving as playwright-in-residence at the Starving Artist Theatre in Ocean Grove, NJ. Congratulations, Larry!

BBC Poet Laureate, **Holly Rose Diane Shaw**, offers this poem for winter . . .

Buried in Snow

Stagnant the winter garden rests
Blurred white and brown branches
Shiver in harrowing wind
A few sparrows quiver—
And oh!
A blue and white breasted nuthatch
Creeping along a tree trunk.

MADE NOTES

Marilyn Dorato, GVBA Executive Directors, reports that the rumors of St. Vincent Hospital's demise are premature: "I just spoke to someone at DOH and was told that much in the press was premature and that despite the hysteria, St. Vincent's is not in imminent danger of closing. Please let your members know since so many people are concerned." Good news and thanks, Marilyn!

Update from the Team at our beloved Chumley's:

- 1) The exterior front portion of the Chumley building has been restored and stabilized.
- 2) The fireplace and stairwells have been restored as well.
- 3) Unfortunately, there were issues with 58 Barrow St. (rear courtyard building that butts up against the rear of 86 Bedford St.) This building has been stabilized and the exterior

walls have to be repaired and restored and this building rendered safe.

4) Immediately after these exterior walls have been repaired, the work can resume on the rear portion of 86 Bedford St.

5) Architects, engineers, and contractors are awaiting approval from DOB and Landmarks on their plans to restore and repair 58 Barrow St.

6) The Liquor License Application was approved by Community Board 2 (with some very fair stipulations).

7) We remain ready to re-enter, restore and bring Chumley's back just as soon as 86 Bedford is rendered safe for our re-entry.

8) Chumley's continues to maintain an ongoing cooperative relationship with landlord, contractors, engineers, architects and all entities involved as we work collectively toward the reopening.

9) We thank BBC for their continued support, concern and help and for their constant monitoring of the situation.

10) Thank You very much for waiting so patiently with us.

The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHIP) is sponsoring three great February evenings: *Pollock*, part of the Society's Film Series, on Wednesday, February 10, 6:30-9:30 pm. Neighborhood Preservation Center, 232 E. 11th St. \$8, reservations required. Then, in celebration of Black History Month, on Wednesday, February 18, 6:30-8 pm, *To Be Young, Gifted and Black: Lorraine Hansberry. A Lecture with Michele Mitchell*. Location given upon reservation. Free, reservations required. And on Wednesday, February 24, 6:30-8 pm, *Transitions: Little Africa and Greenwich Village, 1870-1920: A Lecture with Gerald McFarland*. Judson Memorial Assembly Hall. 230 Thompson St. Free; reservations required. RSVP to rsvp@gvshp.org or 212.475.9585, X 35.

The Greenwich House Music School (46 Barrow St.) announces *Robbie O'Connell & Dan Milner Sing Irish Love Songs*, the first installment of GHMS's Family Concert Series, on Saturday, February 13 at 2 pm at Renee Weiler Concert hall. For more information, call 212.242.4770. Come celebrate Valentine's Day at our sweetheart of a music school!

The Cherry Lane Theatre (38 Commerce Street), as part of its Mentor Project 2010: *Stray* by **Ruth McKee**, mentored by **David Henry Hwang**. Public Reading: February 22, time TBO; Performances,

March 16-27; and *The Belle of Belfast* by **Nate Rufus Edelman**, mentored by **Charles Fuller**. Public Reading: February 8, 7pm; Performances, April 27-May 8. (Tue-Fri, 7pm; Sat 3 & 7 pm) The Mentor Project is an award-winning program that engages leading dramatists in one-on-one mentoring relationships with emerging playwrights for an entire theatre season. Come see the next generation of prize-winning playwrights! For information, go to www.cherrylandtheatre.org; or call 212.989.2020, ext. 30.

Neighborhood Notes & Notables

If you love **Anderson Cooper**, you may not have to love him at

long distance. Cooper paid \$4.3 million for the historic fire house at 84 West 3rd Street. Cooper has been spotted visiting the firehouse, which part of the old insurance-funded Fire Patrol. Interior demolition is underway. According to the *Post*, the building has its original spiral staircases, brass fire poles, overhead beams used to dry hoses and walls covered with murals marking the fire patrol's history. The building was nominated for the National Register of Historic Places.



Listed, but not yet sold, 23 Perry Street is on the market for \$12.9 million. Belonging to **Billy Joel's** ex-wife **Katie Lee**, the former owner was artist **Seward Johnson**, who had installed a pool. According to the information on-line the pool has been "cleverly covered and is used for storage space in a secret spot under the floorboards." The house features a landscaped garden wired for sound.

Meanwhile, **Courtney Love** has been house-hunting in the West Village on and off for the past two years, after "a somewhat messy breakup from Soho celebrity dorm 30 Crosby Street. A *Curbed* tipster reports spotting Love over the weekend exiting the Marc Jacobs store on West 4th and Bank Streets — the one with the new, neon lighting — and heading into 56 Bank Street two doors down.

The New York Times (Jan. 24) published a lengthy piece on the legendary whistle blower, **Frank Serpico**, whose testimony at the Knapp Commission hearings, sparking the biggest shakeup in the history of the NYPD. Serpico was the subject of an award winning movie

Notes & Notables (Cont'd)

with **Al Pacino** in the title role. He lives today in a one-room cabin in the woods near the Hudson River, and is working on his own version of this life chronicled by **Peter Maas's** bio. The memoir begins with the same scene as the film: Serpico shot in the face during a heroin bust on Driggs Avenue in Williamsburg, Feb. 3, 1971. Working title: "Before I Go."

Growing up the son of Italian immigrants in Brooklyn, Serpico revered the local cops. He became a police officer in 1959. His colleagues resented his hippie looks and his zealotry. He lived a bohemian life, with a small garden apartment on Perry Street where he was known as Paco and hid his police badge. He was "appalled at the cliquishness and the payoffs — free meals as well as big bribes.

In 1967, Serpico began talking to high-ranking officials at police headquarters and City Hall. The front-page *Times* story by **David Burnham** on April 25, 1970, pressured **Mayor John V. Lindsay** to form the Knapp Commission, before which Serpico testified that "the atmosphere does not yet exist in which an honest police officer can act without fear of ridicule or reprisal from fellow officers."

Vogue's **Anna Wintour** wrote to the Landmarks Preservation Commission opposing a condo that would loom over her garden. She said that the project is "a totally out-of-scale, inappropriate eight-story building," adding that it would be an "unwelcome intrusion" to the neighboring historic district. The proposed building at 172 Bleecker Street would border MacDougal-Sullivan Gardens, accessible only from the 22 townhouses that surround it. The secret garden was created in the 1920s and, along with the surrounding 19th-century houses, designated a historic district in 1967.

Developer **John Wu's** plan to tear down an 1862 row-house drew protests. The building was knocked down last year and Wu's building plan was approved in October. The Department of Buildings sent a January 7 letter to Wu saying it intended to revoke its approval if its objections were not addressed. Among the objections are that the new building would be too tall, violating the city's "sliver law" regulating height on narrow plots.

Designer **Kein Cross**, turned his 77 Barrow Street basement home into a shop before Christmas. He redecorates twice a year. His ground-level studio apartment was 9 feet at its widest point and 60 feet deep. Two basement apartments divided by a hallway, which Mr. Cross would eventually take over, were the same width, and backed by the boiler room. Unused for 70 years, they had fallen into disrepair; sections of the floor were mud.

The width of the rooms remains the same, but the eye is tricked by the use of mirrors. To make maximum use of the three-foot-wide air shaft outside his windows on the basement level, Mr. Cross affixed mirrors to the walls of the ad-

joining building, put in some of the fake foliage beloved of stylists and added real Spanish moss.

...he employs two crews. ("Everyone should have a crew," he says.) He grew up in Arkansas; his father was in the military, his mother was a trompe l'oeil artist. By the time he was in high school, they had had 17 different homes.

The New York Times Dec., 16, 2009

Many of **Patricia Highsmith's** 22 novels, which include *Strangers on a Train* and the *Talented Mr. Ripley*, take place in the Village. 35 Morton Street contains the subplot that provided Highsmith with a place in 1940 to escape her mother and stepfather. It is where **Kenneth Rowajinski**, the psychopathic dog killer, is murdered in her 1972 novel *A Dog's Ransom*. Her parents lived at 48 Grove Street.

Highsmith lived in the Village in the late 1930s and '40s. "It was her creative store," her biographer Joan Schenkar said, "her little museum of America" that she took with her to Europe when she moved there in the 1960s. Her novel *Found in the Street* takes place in the late 1980s and that novel's wealthy, sexually obsessed couple, the Sutherlands, live on Grove Street; the object of their attention and their murder victim, Elsie Tyler, is killed at 102 Greene Street.



Grove Street is also home to Edith Howland, the mentally disintegrating housewife of *Edith's Diary* and the place where Cliffie, Edith's son, unsuccessfully attempts to murder the family cat Mildew. Farther down Grove is Marie's Crisis Café, a regular stop for Highsmith. At The Village Vanguard, Highsmith frequently went to watch her best friend from high school, the film star **Judy Holliday**, perform.

Highsmith hung out at MacDougal Street's Jumble Shop, a Prohibition-era tearoom, and L's, a lesbian bar. The Washington Square Hotel, formerly the Hotel Earle, was a seedy spot that both Highsmith and her mother often checked into when visiting New York. It was the scene of many of Highsmith's seductions and the inspiration for her short story *Notes From a Respectable Cockroach*.

Resources & Information

The Pink Tea Cup, beloved for its greasy ribs and coconut cake closed in early January, but it may be relocating nearby. The soul-food restaurant opened in 1957 and moved to Grove Street in 1982. Web-site *Eater* notices that a new entity is already applying for a liquor license at a Community Board 2 meeting. **Whoopi Goldberg**, **Oprah Winfrey** and **Liz Smith** have patronized the place, started by Florida native **Mary Raye** to serve soul food “made from the heart with sprinkles of love all over.”

Biography Book Store (266 Bleecker), has also closed. The space is being turned into yet another Marc Jacobs. What demographic does Jacobs not cover? Biography will live on in another incarnation (Bookbook) and in a new location farther south on Bleecker.

The New York Times (Jan.28) published a Village-centric piece on spots to help effectuate home improvements. Unsurprisingly, first was Garber Hardware (710 Greenwich Street) “an institution that has been helping clueless urbanites with household projects since 1884.”

...“for some inspiration take a long look at the 200-year-old freestanding farmhouse (121 Charles Street). For many years, the structure was at 71st Street and York Avenue, where, it was occupied by Margaret Wise Brown, who wrote “Goodnight Moon.” Later, when the Archdiocese of New York, which owned the land, intended to demolish the farmhouse, it was moved down Second Avenue and across 14th Street to its new home in the Village.” The piece suggests stops at the White Horse Tavern (567 Hudson Street), the Spotted Pig, and Housing Works’s Thrift Shop (245 West 10th Street). Hmm! What happened to home improvement?

Pen and Brush, a nonprofit space for public exhibitions and performances, has found a buyer for its town house on East 10th Street. Heirloom Trust offered \$13 million. Members of Pen and Brush voted to approve the sale. The organization determined that the 1848 building, its home of more than 80 years, was no longer suited to its mission and that repairs would be too costly. It will relocate to East 22nd Street. The new site, on which Pen and Brush is still in negotiations, offers about three times the current exhibition space.

The Greenwich Village Block Associations (GVBA) has become an informal consultant for the BrickUnderground website.

Surviving a film shoot on your block

Film crews may love New York City, but the natives — bothered by vanished parking spaces, noise, and blocked traffic — don’t necessarily reciprocate. When a shoot commandeers a residential block, the indigenous population can get especially testy. “The two biggest problems are noise and rude production assistants.”

Greenwich Village residents got so fed up a few years ago that GVBA began an online “report card” in for member block associations to provide feedback on how the crews behaved — or didn’t — as well as the relative generosity of their voluntary contributions to each association.

Ugly Betty (which has been cancelled) Wall Street 2 and the Sex & the City sequel all made generous block association donations this fall, according to the report card. As for a Syms commercial filmed on W. 10th Street? Not so much.

“The original *Law & Order* was always one of the worst,” notes **Marilyn Dorato**, citing arrogance and noise as recurring problems. “*S.U.V.* and *Criminal Intent* are fine.”

Besides employing dictatorial production assistants, other film crew offenses include littering, blocking access to residences, and taking up more parking than allowed. Overnight shoots — punctuated by shouted communication among the crew and klieg lights

bearing down through bedroom windows — are also a flash point.

Size matters when it comes to degree of disruption — but bigger is not necessarily more loudish. “Big films take up a bigger footprint so in that sense they impact the neighborhood more, but they tend to be more professional. Smaller shoots tend to be people breaking into the business who don’t know as much. Commercial shoots tend to be fairly decent.”

Film and parking permits are issued by the Mayor’s Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting. Though crews may request that you walk on a certain side of the street, they are not empowered to order you to do so. Nor can they insist that you turn off the lights and air conditioning in your apartment to avoid disturbing an outdoor shoot.

“If you have an issue, the first person to try to talk to is the location manager, whose contact info should be on the posting signs. You can also call up the Mayor’s office and find out what the permit allows them to do.”

Her best advice to film crews who want to keep the neighbors happy and cooperative? “Polite P.A.’s (production assistants) are a good thing,” says Dorato.

