



The Waverly Bank 11 Neighbors

20 Bank Street

NY, NY 10014

October, 2005

The Bank of New York on Bank Street

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President's Message

On October 3 the WB11 met to discuss relevant issues and/or events. We will meet regularly on a bimonthly basis. The next meeting will be Monday, November 28 at 6:30pm at 20 Bank Street. Please RSVP if you will attend; we will remind you as the date approaches.

One concern is the derelict condition of the St. Vincent's Garden and the tree pits near the hospital that it fails to maintain. For information see the Fall GVBA Newsletter at www.gvba.org. The tree pits on W. 11th Street just off 7th Avenue are also in terrible shape. Someone is routinely putting garbage in one of them against regulations. We can put in a simple ground cover, but someone in a building nearby would need to water and maintain them. If you are interested in working on what could be a beautiful mini garden, contact us. A few people could manage this.

It is possible to improve the lighting on W. 11th Street by installing Bishop's Crooks Lamps. Bank Street and Waverly Place are complete; it seems a shame that W. 11th Street is stuck with ugly cobra head lamps. Someone, however, needs to take charge - with guidance, of course. If you are interested in working on this project get in touch and/

or attend the next meeting.

We will install a small plaque on the Bishop's Crook near the home of Bill Bowser who worked tirelessly for Greenwich Village. **To contribute, make checks out to the Greenwich Village Block Associations but send to us at 20 Bank Street.** Steven Kraus and Barbara Datesh are overseeing the project.

We are in a quandary regarding the installation of tree guards which we thought was a no brainer. We have funds for approximately 6 guards, but it dawned on us that they should go where people want them; not everyone does. We discussed the possibility of doing this on a matching funds basis, but no final decision has been made. If you have an opinion and want to be involved, attend the next meeting.

We want to add additional trees to our blocks. We had arranged with Councilmember Christine Quinn's office to expedite applications for planting trees; they must be signed by a property owner; we got no cooperation from two buildings that we had earmarked for new trees. So we have to leave it to residents. If you want a new tree in front of your building and/or can get an application signed by the appropriate person, we are happy to help.

Yes, I'll join.... renew. Membership dues for 2005 are only \$10 per person, \$20 per family.

Name: _____

Address: _____ Apt# _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ eMail: _____

Enclosed is \$10 \$25 \$50 Other

Please contact me about:

Distributing newsletters in my building

Photographs for newsletters

Other _____

Please make checks payable and mail to:

Waverly Bank 11 Neighbors

20 Bank Street

New York, NY 10014

Planning for events

Writing articles for newsletters

We regret the passing of Phyllis Kleban at her home on Cape Cod on June 14 at the age of 96. With her husband Clarence Dettmers she owned and operated Ye Waverly Inn from 1937 to 1961. After Mr. Dettmers died, she married Leon Kleban in 1961 and moved to Dennis, Mass. After graduation from Simmons College in Boston, she had come to New York to work at Vanity Fair as the secretary to Clare Boothe Luce. She also served as an editor for the American Committee to Preserve Abu Simbel, the ancient Egyptian site on the Nile which was covered by the lake created by the Aswan Dam. She was a member of the WB11 Neighbors and wrote that she enjoyed hearing about her old neighborhood.

Neighborhood Notes & Notables

On August 9, the **Arntzen Family (Leif, Lloyd, Tom, Evan and Miles)** treated the neighborhood to a free jazz concert on Cornelia Street. One of the sponsors was the **Central Village Block Association** and 500+ people turned out for an festive evening. Along with Louis Armstrong tunes, the show featured a translation of a Norwegian folk tune, a song that inspired a change in direction in the decline of rural life in northern Canada in the 1980s.

Sushi Samba is in hot water; neighbors have reached the boiling point about its illegal white rooftop tent that also violates the city's fire code. Construction of a second story had been approved by the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, but the restaurant has yet to comply. The LPC has requested that heavy fines (\$5,000 a day) be levied against the raucous restaurant and the next deadline is October 15.

On June 2, the **Friends of the Jefferson Market Library Bell** dedicated the commemorative plaque for the effort to fund a striking mechanism for the Bell — old Jeff — which hangs in the clock tower of the Library. Because the Library is currently shrouded in unattractive scaffolding, the Friends decided to postpone the installation. The plaque assigns the hourly rings to supporters who contributed \$1,000 or more. Jeff's first ring was dedicated to **Assemblymember Bill Passanante** who had just recently passed away.

Martin Scorsese's Warner Brothers film, *The Departed* starring **Leonardo DiCaprio** (who bought an apartment in Hudson Blue on West Street across from Pier 46 south of the Meat Market), **Matt Damon** and **Jack Nicholson**

shot a scene on May 31st at the Cinema Village on E. 12th Street. *The Departed* is a remake of *Infernal Affairs*, the 2002 Hong Kong film. In this version, Matt Damon plays a gangster who infiltrates the police, while DiCaprio is a cop who goes undercover inside a gang. The film company made a generous donation to the **Greenwich Village Block Associations** which passed it on to the Holy Apostle Soup Kitchen, the Village Temple Soup Kitchen, the Washington Square Music Festival, the Merchant's House Museum and the Greenwich House Piano Fund.

The Sept. 19, 2005 issue of *New York Magazine* contained a scathing piece by **Adam Sternbergh** on the "tempest in a teapot and don't these folks have anything better to do" cupcake wars between **Magnolia Bakery, the Little Cupcake Bakery and the Buttercup Bake Shop**. The original two partners (**Jennifer Appel and Alyssa Tory**) of Magnolia split. Appel moved north to Chelsea to open Buttercup and now she's trying to prevent a former employee, **Mark Libertini**, from opening the Little Cupcake Bakery in Brooklyn. According to the article, "former employees would seem hard-pressed to open any kind of bakery uncontested, unless it's a bakery that specializes in fish."

If you were on/near the Hudson River Bike Path at dawn in mid August, you may have thought that you saw **Lance Armstrong** pedalling by — you did.

Tobias Schneebaum, a Greenwich Village writer, artist and explorer who in the 1950s lived among cannibals and sampled their traditional cuisine, died from Parkinson's disease on September 20. He was in his mid-80's. In 2000, he was the subject of the documentary film, *Keep the River on Your Right: A Modern Cannibal Tale*, which follows his return to the Amazon, and to Indonesian New Guinea, where he also lived. His memoir, also titled *Keep the River on Your Right* described how a mild-mannered gay artist wound up living among the Arakmbut, an indigenous cannibalistic people in the rainforest of Peru. In 1955, Schneebaum, then a painter, won a Fulbright fellowship to study art in Peru and vanished into the jungle. Seven months later, he emerged, naked and covered in body paint. The Arakmbut had welcomed him and homosexuality was not stigmatized. One day, he accompanied some Arakmbut men on what he assumed was an ordinary hunting trip. They reached another village. His friends massacred all the men there. In the victory celebration, parts of the victims were roasted and eaten. Schneebaum partook; later that evening, he wrote, he ate part of a heart. It was an experience, he later said, that would haunt him. He left the Arakmbut shortly afterward. Anthropologists were aghast: ethnographers were not supposed to sleep with their subjects, much less eat them.

Old News

ABINGDON SQUARE'S REVOLVING CYCLES — Part 2, from the NY Times—September 4, 1921

By Erneszt Harvier

Town Talk — The tide of foreign immigration into NYC has always flowed north from the Battery...Greenwich Village received its influx of newcomers...from the Hudson River Valley and from Northern New Jersey. As a consequence, it retained for many years its semi-rural character and...the “gossip of the pump” was a feature of its local life...at nearly every street corner there was a pump which was a meeting-place... To this pump they carried empty pails and much gossip and, returning, brought back their pails full and their heads full, too — of the talk of the neighborhood. In some parts of the Village the custom of “swapping stories” still survives.

The Bandstand —...on Abingdon Square, the City of New York erected...a very elaborate... bandstand and speakers and pagoda combined. It is warranted to resist wind, rain or a hostile audience... a sort of tribune for the discontented... after the fashion of the Hyde Park meetings in London...the present residents — either have very little to complain of or other methods for making their complaints known. The stand is practically deserted except that upon fair days many children use it for such games as hide and-seek and “I spy” and at such times the bandstand is the liveliest spot on the whole of the historic square.



Early Pioneers — History does not record the precise date when the first Greenwich Villager of the present series located in the Village...the Abingdon Square neighborhood was a region of homes, of factories, of churches, of clubs and of business houses, old-fashioned, quaint...unprogressive, substantial, parochial and friendly to all... On the fateful day...some man (or perhaps some woman) putting foot on the territory (a heavy foot, if it was a man's) ... may have exclaimed: “How artistic!”

...the “future fate of the ward” was sealed... men and women — the men with pipes, long hair and palettes and the women with cigarettes, bobbed hair and jaunty blouses — (*moved*) into... Greenwich Village and it became...the Latin Quarter of New York... Studios sprouted up like (*Jack's*) beanstalk... Kitchenettes replaced kitchens. What was bizarre and extreme in decoration replaced “what was conventional.” Restaurants described as lairs, dens, caves and roosts succeeded the former eating-houses. Odd apparel succeeded the staid attire, previously to be seen on the chief thoroughfares. Glass replaced slate for roofs, and brlc-à-brac, sometimes described as “junk,” had an immediate local market.

Such was the change quickly wrought in Greenwich Village, a large part of which... is not Greenwich Village at all, for the eastern boundary... is 6th Avenue and most of the ornamental and articulate newcomers have located in...the Washington Square section elsewhere. Time and tide... truly wait for no man and... matters of space count for little with bohemians — as the amateur artist said when he asked a patron for \$20 — to pay a bill of \$5. Popular

opinion has fixed its own boundaries for Greenwich Village and as there is no one to gainsay them, they may be accepted as a lively imagination defines them.

The Aftermath ...a pervasive ...irresistible impulse led and still leads hundreds of residents of uptown New York, of Brooklyn and various other cities to see the Village. They come in sightseeing cars, in motors and cabs, on foot, by street car and subway and at nearly all hours and on all days to see what the Village looks like and whom its residents resemble. This has given Greenwich Village its chief distinction or vogue and there are no present signs of its abatement...

Meanwhile the current of life eddies very much as before in that section...to the west of Abingdon Square... there is a large resident population and local industries of which the chief... is that of the Western Electric Company which gives employment ...to many thousands. To the north there is... the National Biscuit Company...The docks between Houston and 12th Streets do a large share of New York's mammoth commerce. The market section to the north of this and south of 14th Street furnishes...New York hotels and restaurants with their daily supplies. On a clear night in midsummer hundreds of residents...come over to Abingdon Square which presents at such times an animation not observable during the day when a few wayfarers only stop to rest, to talk or to observe whether anything is transpiring on the square, which is not usually the case.

Topographically, Abingdon Square will never be a serious rival to Central Park which has an area of 843 acres, while Abingdon Square has an area of one-fifth of an acre only. But the traditions which cluster about the neighborhood ... make it notable... Yet it would be difficult for the noble Earl Willoughby Bertie, if restored to animation, to learn that a stone's throw from his former residence on Abingdon Road the Bohemians Inc. ...had arranged for the production of the *Greenwich Village Follies of 1921*...a musical comedy of New York's Latin Quarter revised and staged by John Murray Anderson at an uptown theatre. Yet such is the case.

Bob Hope died in 2004 at the age of 100.

A lot has happened since then. In 1904

- **The average US life expectancy was 47.**
- **8% of homes had a telephone.**
- **There were 8,000 cars in the US & 144 miles of paved road.**
- **The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10mph.**
- **The Eiffel Tower was the tallest structure in the world.**
- **The average US wage was 22 cents an hour.**
- **More than 95% of births took place at home.**
- **Most women washed their hair once a month with borax or egg yolks for shampoo.**
- **Crosswords, canned beer, & iced tea didn't exist.**
- **There was no Mother's Day.**
- **Coca Cola contained cocaine.**
- **Marijuana, heroin & morphine were available over the counter.**

Resources & Information

Starting in September, the city dimmed parts of its skyline to ward off **migratory birds**. The Chrysler Building, Rockefeller Center, the Citigroup Center and the World Financial Center are among the buildings that dim or turn off nonessential lighting at midnight. Thus the city's skyscrapers defer to nature at least twice a year: by dimming their lights in September and October, during the peak of the fall migratory season, and again in April and May, during the peak of the spring migratory season.

The Empire State Building's lighting policy to protect migratory birds is decades old; other buildings have used netting on glass windows. This new policy will be the first citywide effort to protect birds. It is aimed at buildings taller than 40 stories, as well as lower glass buildings that hug the Hudson and East Rivers, which birds use as navigational aides. About five million birds pass through NYC during migration season. More than 100 million birds die each year from crashing into glass on structures of all types.

Birds cannot recognize glass as a barrier and avoid it. Lights distract them from visual cues received from the stars and the moon. The lights of tall city buildings pull the birds off their path and into urban canyons, especially when skies are overcast. Then they either crash into the building's glass at night because they are attracted to the light or they circle the buildings until they become exhausted. In the morning, when they try to escape the city, they crash into the glass because they are confused by the reflection of sky. The dead birds are hard to spot because many are small songbirds. Even with a dimmed skyline, the problem of birds crashing into glass remains. Environmental groups are working with the construction industry to come up with glass that can be seen by birds, potentially by giving the glass a UV coating.

New Yorkers in need of more stuff or in need of getting rid of too much stuff will be interested in **Freecycle**. The group connects givers with getters via e-mail. Sign up at www.freecycle.org. For information on the NYC chapter, call 212•592•4184.

On Monday nights, the **Village Vanguard** features its own Vanguard Jazz Orchestra for an evening of Big Band Music. Established by **Thad Jones and Mel Lewis**, the Grammy-nominated VJO has been playing Monday nights at the club for over 33 years. In an interview in Gotham, rock guitarist **Brian Selzer** (formerly of the Stray Cats) includes the Vanguard's Monday nights among the things he likes to do when in New York. He includes eating at the Strip House on 12th Street because of its "old time steak joint vibe."

Cemusa Inc., the Spanish advertising company will pay more than \$1 billion to put toilets, bus shelters and newsstands on NYC streets. Cemusa is in negotiations to build 20 public toilets, 3,300 bus shelters and 330 newsstands at no cost to the city. In return for

paying the city at least \$1 billion in fees over 20 years, the company will receive permission to sell advertising on the structures. Cemusa outbid 4 other companies, including JCDecaux and Viacom, both with more experience. Cemusa spent \$96,000 to hire the company of lobbyist and Democratic fund-raiser, **Suri Kasirer** (wife of Giuliani aide **Bruce Teitelbaum**). How Cemusa was chosen, as well as its designs for the toilets etc., remains a mystery. Some in the know expect one of the losing companies may sue to block the project.

According to Daily Candy there are 3 additions to the Village lexicon:

gansevorium —n. The haze that comes over one when sitting on the Gansevoort rooftop in the summer, characterized by a willingness to buy \$18 cocktails and a lack of care when said drinks take 30 minutes to arrive.

marislime — n. The clientele who fill the Maritime Hotel's courtyard and bars at night. 2. Nighttime scenes characterized by thick clouds of smoke and sweaty faux hipsters.

alphabet pity — n. Awarding extra points or praise to venues east of First Avenue solely because of geography — and not actual merit.

Government News

Councilmember Christine Quinn who chairs the Health Committee of the NYC Council recently held a hearing on animal control services in late September. Euthanasia has dropped more than 25% in the last four years and rescue groups are now welcomed into the city's shelters to help homeless animals find new families. NYC Animal Care & Control contacts with the city Healthy Dept. to provide animal control services; they cannot turn away any unwanted animal and are trying to become a "no kill" facility in 5 years. Thus far, sufficient funding has not been made available to ensure that this becomes a reality. They receive some help from the ASPCA and the Mayor's Alliance for NYC Animals.

Councilmember Alan Gerson had introduced legislation to protect our unique cobblestone streets. At a public June meeting, the Landmarks Preservation Commission expressed interest in designating the historic roadbed of Charles Lane. The construction crew (Bovis Lend Lease) of the new Richard Meier building near the West Side Highway promises that it will restore the Lane to its authentic state.

