

We're the Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza

ISSUED 2007

GATEWAY TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND HOME TO THE KATHARINE HEPBURN GARDEN

A nonprofit community organization dedicated to park preservation and beautification

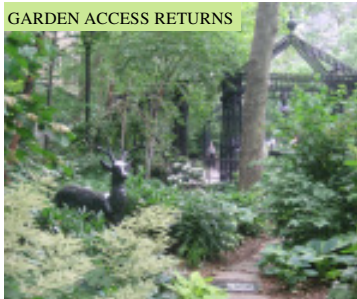
Park Groups Press for Public Hearings

It's been almost a year since City Council promised a public hearing to air the grievances of over 100 community groups who look after NYC parks. These groups vary in size and structure, but what we all have in common is a growing realization that while we spend time and money maintaining city parks, we have little or no say in administrative decisions that affect us or the parks we serve.

For Friends, this was brought to light last year when the Parks Department awarded the park's café license to NY Milkshake Co. When we filed a lawsuit over what we considered a flawed review of bidders, the judge ruled that our group had "no standing," thus relegating us to disenfranchised miscreants even though the City Comptroller voiced objections to the selection process in a strongly worded letter to Commissioner Adrian Benepe. Now, only the Parks Department knows whether the concessionaire has produced the stellar revenues projected to win the bid, but the new cafe survived the summer with a range of menu items, including liquor, now being sold.

However, the underlying issue is not one of menus but of a malfunction that affects numerous NYC parks. City government continues to build and restore parks while undercutting maintenance and operations, leaving the Parks Department with devoted managers but few trained park workers. Community groups have assumed a substantive role in maintaining the City's park system, and consequently, demand more say in what goes on in their respective parks. The list of grievances screams to be

GARDEN ACCESS RETURNS



The entrance to the Katharine Hepburn Garden, closed for the summer due to demolition of the ADL building, is open again.

addressed and won't go away, despite the foot dragging of City Council to take on this thorny topic. At the top of the list is concession reform.

As for our organization, we generate the funds to contract services for basic upkeep like fountain-cleaning and litter removal while volunteers plant and tend the garden. We also cover the cost of plants and supplies, including the baskets on 26 lamp posts. In addition, we host and facilitate numerous events.

We have no paid staff, but because we care, we're doing the job. We are committed to public space and a green environment, and welcome the opportunity to volunteer. However, the system would work better if the city allocated sufficient funds for park maintenance, leaving community groups to provide the extras, such as special programs and events. When groups provide funding for essential upkeep, they should be formally recognized in the administrative process. We deserve to be heard. The onus is upon City Council to create the forum.

GREENMARKET How We Made It Work

Of all the activities that Friends has initiated, the greenmarket has proved to be among the most popular. Yet, when the newly constructed park was first opened to the public in 1998, Adrian Benepe, who was then Manhattan Parks Commissioner, opposed a market in Hammarskjold park due to concerns that the farmers' trucks would deface the gleaming new plaza. Even some of our board members questioned the proposed market. While a greenmarket was appropriate to Union Square, it might detract from the dignity of this Gateway to the UN, the naysayers warned.

"We contacted Council on the Environment, organizers of the markets, to work with us and address the concerns," recalled Bill Huxley, one of the founding officers of Friends.

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REPORT: Annual Members Meeting

Each year, we hold our Annual Members Meeting to elect our officers and directors, share our plans and achievements and provide a financial overview. This meeting is a basic requirement of tax-exempt nonprofits but it also gives us an opportunity to meet our members, acknowledge our sources of support and preview summer/fall activities.

This year's meeting was held on May 24, 2007, at the tourism office on the ground floor of the Turkish Mission to the UN, located at 821 First Avenue, just around the corner from the park.

In her opening statement, Friends President Sherrill Kazan thanked the

(continued on page 4)

DAG HAMMARSKJOLD PLAZA IS LOCATED ON EAST 47TH STREET BETWEEN FIRST AND SECOND AVENUES, NEW YORK CITY

Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza ~ 132 East 43rd Street #129~ NYC 10017 ~ 212-629-2003 www.hammarskjoldplaza.org

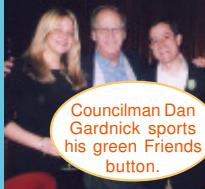


GATSBY GLAMOUR

We held our annual fundraiser on March 25th amid the restored splendor of the Campbell Apartment, a chic cocktail lounge in Grand Central Terminal, once the lair of tycoon John W. Campbell.



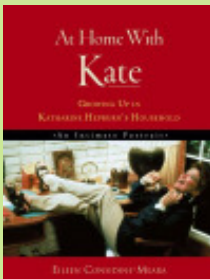
President Sherrill Kazan (center) flanked by board members (L-R) Millie Margiotta, Bill Huxley (rear), Anne Saxon-Hersh, Ken McClure, Joan Levy (front), Nancy Lupton, and Olga Hoffmann.



Councilman Dan Gardnick sports his green Friends button.



State Senator Liz Krueger (L) and Assemblyman Jonathan Bing (R) with Sherrill, our president.



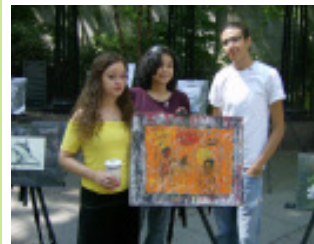
AT HOME WITH KATE
BY EILEEN COSIDINE MEARA
JOHN WILEY & SONS, 2007

This year would have been Katharine Hepburn's 100th birthday, and at May garden party, three of Kate's confidants graced us with their presence: (L to R) correspondence secretary Christiane McCloskey, her housekeeper, Norah Moore, and family friend Emily King. A new memoir, "At Home With Kate," by Moore's daughter, offers an enchanting look into Hepburn's private world in Turtle Bay.



"Here are the memories, the people, the recipes that were closest to Kate Hepburn's heart—her extended family under the guidance of the great caretaker and cook Norah Moore."—Liz Smith, syndicated columnist

For the third year, the High School of Art & Design worked with Friends to bring Art in the Park to Hammar skjold Plaza. Here, instructor Jacqueline Roberts with two students.



Celebrating the Katharine Hepburn Garden



VOLUNTEERS for spring planting: (L) Houlihan Lokey and (R) Morgan Stanley groups under the direction of resident gardeners (with shovels) Anne Saxon-Hersh, Millie Margiotta, Orin Buck and Allan Levy.





GREENMARKET: 14 vendors and hands-on management. At right, Shana Lewis.

Many neighborhood residents and office workers make the greenmarket a weekly ritual.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

“Concession revenues add approximately \$60 million annually to City coffers. Yet parks and most groups that provide essential upkeep derive no benefit. Concession reform is necessary to come to terms with this issue”

SHERILL KAZAN, PRESIDENT

FRIENDS OF DAG HAMMARSKJOLD PLAZA

“The multiple arrangements with nonprofit partner organizations that help manage the parks have not been made fully transparent and have not been established in accord with consistent guidelines for how to divide responsibilities between the Parks Department and its partners and how to divide concession revenues between the City and its partners.”

Quote from “Making the Most of Our Parks,” a recent study conducted by New Yorkers for Parks and the Citizens Budget Commission. A complete copy of this comprehensive report can be downloaded at www.ny4p.org.

WEBSITES TO WATCH

New Yorkers for Parks www.ny4p.org

NYC Park Advocates www.nycparkadvocates.org

Friends of DHP www.hammaraskjoldplaza.org

Greenmarket (continued from page 1)

After several meetings on the Plaza, the Council drew up a plan that provided for the farm trucks to park along the 47th Street curb with their tents arranged in single file close by. The row of park benches nearest the curb was incorporated into the market, but most of the walkway between the two bench rows remained clear, leaving an unobstructed vista from the entrance dome to the UN. The second row of benches remained free for seating. The drawings and guidelines were put before the Parks Committee of CB6, who supported the Greenmarket, and the Parks Department agreed to the market on a trial basis.

“At first, our board voted that no meat, poultry or fish should be sold, but the market proved so popular that over time, these vendors have been added, and the greenmarket just keeps getting better,” Huxley notes. “We continue to work closely with the Council, and they’re often around on market days.”

In the early days, Huxley tirelessly promoted the greenmarket through Friends. He created ads for *Our Town* and printed flyers, distributing them on street corners. We even had musicians play on market days during lunch hour. Word spread and the market thrived.

Supporting the Small-Scale Farmer

Today, many neighborhood residents and office workers make the greenmarket a weekly ritual. The food stalls provide a range of colorful displays that bring the country to our urban landscape.

“I like to support our farm community,” said one shopper, stuffing her bag with fresh greens. “I’m always discovering something new, like all these Asian varieties.”

A man looking over the recipe sheets of Council on the Environment’s promotional booth said, “I get ideas for different ways to cook vegetables and how to combine them.”

“Sometimes shopping here costs a little more, but I know it’s fresh and that it’s local,” said another fan of the market. “Those giant strawberries sold at the supermarket taste like cardboard. These

smaller berries have the best texture and flavor. Smaller is better.”

For many greenmarket shoppers, produce grown on family farms, picked and driven to the city, seems a healthier bet. The recent E.coli contamination of spinach shipped from western megagrowers underscored the dangers of our country’s giant food distribution system, not to mention the energy drain. According to a *New York Times* article, “...local has become the new organic, helped in large part by a growing concern over the environmental impact of transporting food thousands of miles.”

Buying local really does help small farms survive since many have been squeezed out of the wholesale market, even by health food chains like Whole Foods.

Besides, shopping at the Greenmarket is fun. With all the rain this summer, a bumper crop of apples is on its way. See you at the cider stand.

POLICE CAPTAIN DERAILS FILM FEST

This year, we planned to introduce movie nights in the park with three films featuring Katharine Hepburn. From the time we first announced the project, everyone, sponsors included, loved the idea. Everyone except the 17th Precinct, which issues sound permits. City Councilman Dan Garodnick came to our assistance, citing the ordinance that presumably laid out the rules: *no residential building may be within 50 feet of amplification*.

We then provided architectural drawings of the park showing that residential buildings were well beyond 50 feet, but Police Captain John Wallace refused to budge, contending that amplified sound after 8 PM would set a precedent for all groups, UN demonstrations included. As the park watchdog, we’re deeply disappointed that the Captain makes no distinction between UN demonstrations and community events, in particular 90-minute movies. *What do you think? Write and let us know!*

REPORT (continued from page 1)

Consul General of Turkey for graciously donating the space. Paintings of a the Turkish landscape lined the walls in a special exhibition, adding to the ambience, while Turkish treats brought a taste of the exotic to the refreshments.

Kazan acknowledged the board of directors for their work, in particular Treasurer Nancy Lupton, who was leaving the board after five years, during which time the organization made great strides.

The president's comments included a followup to our 2006 lawsuit against NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). We have since enjoyed cordial relations with DPR, while the call for transparency and concession reform has been amplified, she noted. Although our organization did not achieve a legal victory, we garnered significant media coverage which united us with other park groups and advocacy organizations, gaining their respect and support while increasing our visibility with city government.

Kazan thanked State Assemblyman Jonathan Bing and Councilman Dan Garodnick, for their support as intermediaries with the Parks Department and other agencies, as well as their generous funding. Addressing our members, Assemblyman Bing commended Friends for making Hammar skjöld Plaza an inviting, vibrant public space. As a resident of Turtle Bay, Bing said he sees the park almost every day. Councilman Garodnick congratulated Friends on our hard work in keeping the centerpiece of the neighborhood clean and green and promised continued funding support.

Treasurer Nancy Lupton reported that Friends is in sound financial shape, noting that income last year amounted to \$50,000. In addition, we received a capital funding grant for \$50,000 from City Councilman Garodnick to be used for architectural signage in the form of information kiosks as well as badly needed structural repairs. Lupton noted that our funding support comes from sponsors, grants, and member contributions. She emphasized that we have no paid staff and all monies go toward the betterment of the park.

Director of Development Anne Saxon-Hersh defined her role as one of strategic planning, developing a common vision and working with the board to marshal the necessary resources. As Grants Chair, she reported that the Katharine Hepburn Garden is one of the biggest expenditures with approximately \$15,000 worth of plant purchases made each year, thanks largely to the support of the Greenacre Foundation. Labor is provided mostly by volunteers, utilizing corporate groups for major plantings and a core group of devoted members for ongoing maintenance. She noted that the Ford Foundation has been a major source of funding since our inception, helping us bring world-class performances to the park, as well as supporting our general operations. Sponsorships offer an opportunity for commercial businesses and individual donors to participate. Events are the most popular form of sponsorships, she reported.

Vice President Kenneth McClure, chair of the Events Committee, outlined the events planned through summer and early fall.

Joan Levy, co-chair of the Nominating Committee, then read the slate of nominees for officers and directors of the board for 2007-08. The vote was unanimously passed in favor of the slate, and three new board members were welcomed: Alan Levy (Treasurer) and Directors Lorraine Belmont, Judy Ouziel and Erbil Ganasti (*see masthead on this page for complete list of officers/directors*). Corresponding Secretary Olga Hoffmann was recognized as the new Membership Committee Chair.

In closing notes, the president applauded Vice President Lesley Haberman for her generous financial support and the participation of the Family School (Haberman is headmistress) in many of our activities.

Manhattan Parks Commissioner Bill Castro stopped by to express good will, noting that parks had benefited under Mayor Bloomberg and the city's strong economy.

Representatives of the Japan Society announced their plan to exhibit installation art by Yoko Ono on the Plaza.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

FRIENDS OF DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD PLAZA IS a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community organization whose sole mission is park beautification, preservation and vitality. Our volunteer activities include keeping Dag Hammar skjöld Plaza clean and green and organizing events that foster community. As stewards of the park, we work in partnership with NYC Parks and Recreation, city officials and other organizations who share our commitment to public space. Membership is open to all who wish to share in our mission.

PRESIDENT
SHERRILL KAZAN

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ALLAN LEVY

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JUDY OUZIEL, TOM PAYNE,
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PHOTOGRAPHER: VIVIAN GORDON

Yes, I want to help my park!

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: (home) _____
(office phone) _____
email: _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation:

- Green Thumb \$25
- Conservationist \$50
- Benefactor \$100
- Guardian \$500
- Angel (\$1000 and above)
- OTHER \$ _____
- I'D LIKE TO VOLUNTEER.

Please make checks payable to
Friends of Dag Hammar skjöld Plaza
and mail to:

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