

Friends of Fort Tryon Park

GAZETTE

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Fall/Winter 2003/2004

Pilgrimage

By Nancy Bruning

Not too long ago, I made a pilgrimage to the Olmsted National Historic Site in Brookline, Massachusetts. Fort Tryon Park, like Central Park and Prospect Park, is an Olmsted-designed park. The first thing you notice as you approach the site is the stately elm on the center lawn, which made me feel right at home. The grounds, too, had a familiar feel, since they echo the principles and elements of the picturesque and pastoral styles of landscaping favored by the Olmsted family. Olmsted felt strongly that visiting informal natural settings were a way for people to escape city pressures and were places that nourished the soul. He believed beautiful scenery was physically restorative and also exerted a moral influence on people and promoted “communicativeness” and a healthy participation in civic life.

In 1883, Frederick Law Olmsted moved his home and office from New York to a farmhouse in the leafy Boston suburb. This is where he established the first full-

scale professional practice of landscape design in the world. His two sons, John Charles and Frederick Jr. (the designers of Fort Tryon Park), apprenticed there and acquired a more thorough grounding in the field than their father, whose own education was rather haphazard in comparison.

Frederick Sr. was a Renaissance man—an engineer, artist, and reformer who experimented with farming, writing and publishing, public health administration, preservation, and urban and regional planning.

In 1980, the National Park service acquired the site and began to inventory and conserve the historic design records. Today, the Olmsted National Historic Site is open to the public and is both a museum and a center for the study and preservation of landscapes. Friendly, knowledgeable Park Rangers offer tours of the grounds and office and a variety of programs.



If you go:

Address:
Olmstead National Historic Site
99 Warren Street, Brookline, MA

Hours:
10:30 AM-4:30 PM, Friday,
Saturday, Sunday

**Limited parking, ramp access to
first floor only.**

617/566-1689 for program info

www.nps.gov/frla



George Washington Fought Here

On Sunday, November 16 (the actual day of the battle!) Fort Tryon Park was the site for the Commemoration of the Anniversary of the Battle of Fort Washington.

American history took place right here in Washington Heights 227 years ago. We learned what happened...and a whole lot more! The National Park Service set up a campsite to demonstrate how the Continental Army functioned during the Revolutionary War. Talking to present-day Americans were: General George Washington, a camp surgeon who explained how wounds were treated during the Revolutionary war, a blacksmith, a weaver; we had a training session on how to march like a soldier, and saw demonstrations of how a gun was loaded and fired.

Autumn arrives in Fort Tryon Park (all photos in this issue by Marianne Carroll)



The Cycles of Nature

by Marianne Carroll

What's in Bloom November

African blue-eyed daisy, ageratum, aster, autumn crocus, bearded iris, beauty berry, Betty Prior rose, blue salvia, butter & eggs, butterfly bush, calendula, cosmos, cottoneaster, dahlia, daphne, firethorn, flowering tobacco, foxglove, gladiola, hawthorn, heath, heirloom zinnia, holly, hollyhock, impatiens, juniper, lavender, lemon & tangerine gem marigolds, malva, Mexican sunflower, petunia, phlox, plumbago, spiderflower, St. John's Wort, stonecrop, Virginia creeper, yew

December/January

Beauty berry, cottoneaster, firethorn, hawthorn, heath, holly, yew

February

Crocus, Lenten rose, witch hazel

March

Crocus, daffodils, forsythia, Lenten rose, snow drops, winter blooming jasmine

Celestial Events

New Moon:

Dec 23 4:43 am Capricorn
Jan 21 4:06 pm Aquarius
Feb 20 4:19 am Pisces
Mar 20 5:42 pm Aries

Full Moon:

Jan 7 10:41 am "Wolf" moon
Feb 6 3:48 am "Snow" moon
Mar 6 6:15 pm "Worm" moon

Winter Solstice:

Dec 22 2:04 am

March Equinox:

Mar 20 1:50 am

Credits

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Letter from the President: Just Say Yes!!!

Now's the time of year that our minds and hearts turn to the notion of New Year's resolutions. Why not include on your list the resolution to give back to your wonderful community? There are plenty of groups from which to choose, but I hope you will choose Friends of Fort Tryon Park. We are run strictly by volunteers who give their time and energy to making the park the glorious place it is. While we welcome your interest in all our committees, there are two areas where we are in urgent need of your help: we need team leaders for our beautification committee and also additional members for our steering committee, which functions as a board of directors. Won't you join us by becoming more active?

✓ Team Leaders

Beautification is the heart and soul of Friends of Fort Tryon Park. However, if the Beautification Committee is to have a full schedule of events next season, we need additional Team Leaders. Team Leaders will assist Mike Klein, the Beautification Chair, in coordinating projects and supervising volunteers of all ages. It is a great way to really become involved in the park, get some of your favorite projects accomplished, meet your neighbors and make new friends. Beautification sessions will resume in the spring, but if we don't get help for Mike for next year we may have to scale back on some of our sessions. We are still planning for a Weeding Session in March and our annual Earth Day Event in April. Please step forward and help your neighborhood organization that is doing so much to keep the park—"your backyard"—beautiful and something we can all be proud of. If interested please contact Mike Klein at (212) 795-2300 or at mkleinnyc@rcn.com IT'S ALL A MATTER OF TEAM WORK.

✓ Steering Committee Openings

Also, we have openings for several steering committee positions. These are open to any member who loves the park and has the ideas, energy, and commitment to help make it better. Let us know you are interested by sending us a letter by email or snail mail—just a short paragraph or two telling us why you are interested and what you could bring to the organization.

Here's Your Big Chance to Influence Your World!

Other Committees to Join:

- ✓ Programming/grant writing
- ✓ Newsletter—writers, photographers
- ✓ Membership—database, mailing parties
- ✓ Outreach—design and post posters, flyers
- ✓ Events—plan events, help at membership/volunteer sign-in table



Nancy Bruning, President,
Friends of Fort Tryon Park

Reports & Events

WINTER FUN ROUND-UP: CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Just because Jack Frost is nipping at your toes, it doesn't mean the parks isn't still alive with activity. Come join the Urban Park Ranger Explorer Programs for winter fun in the parks from Winter Tree ID to Nature Drawing. Got more energy? Come snowshoeing, climb the High Bridge Water Tower or help with the Inwood Hill Bird Count. The following activities for families are free of charge. For activities requiring reservations call 311 and ask for the Urban Park Rangers. For Inwood Hill Nature Center enter the Park at 218th Street, and Indian Road (212) 304-2365. For more information call 311 and ask for the "Urban Park Rangers." Or, log onto www.nyc.gov/parks. To register for a program call 1 (866) 692-3295.

December 17, 7 PM
Open Mic/Inwood Hill Nature Center

December 28, 9 PM
Inwood Hill Bird Count

January 3, 10 AM
Owl Trek/Inwood Hill Nature Center

January 4, 1-4 PM
Birdfeeder Workshop/Inwood Hill Nature Center

January 11, 1 PM
Native American Pathways/Inwood Hill Nature Center

January 17, 11 AM
Snowshoeing/Inwood Hill Nature Center

January 18, 1 PM
Conservation and Composting/Inwood Hill Nature Center

January 21, 7 PM
Open Mic/Inwood Hill Nature Center

January 25, 12 PM
High Bridge Water Tower/Highbridge Park

January 31, 10 AM
Nature Photography/Inwood Hill Nature Center

February 1, 1 PM
Winter Orienteering/Inwood Hill Nature Center

February 7, 9 PM
Winter Waterfowl/Inwood Hill Nature Center

February 8, 9 PM
Winter Survival Workshop/Inwood Hill Nature Center

February 8, 3 PM
Meet the Author, Avi/Inwood Hill Nature Center

February 14, 11 AM
Cupid and Other Myths of the Forest/Inwood Hill Center

February 15, 1 PM
Poetry Café/Inwood Hill Nature Center

February 18, 7 PM
Open Mic/Inwood Hill Nature Center

The Cloisters

GALLERY WORKSHOPS FOR FAMILIES

Children ages 4 to 12 and their families are invited to join these hour-long programs, which are free with Museum admission. Each workshop combines a gallery tour with an art-making activity. Meet in the Main Hall at 1 PM. No reservations are required. For more information and reservations, call (212) 650-2280. Or, log onto www.metmuseum.org.

December 27
Medieval Christmas Celebrations

Instructor: Betty Ann Murphy

GALLERY TALKS

Gallery Talks are presented by museum curators, conservators, educators, and other specialists in medieval art and history. Scheduled at noon and 2 PM, these talks are free with Museum admission. No reservations are required.

December 20
Passion, Murder, and Forgiveness: Medieval Legends of Saints

Ena Heller, Guest Lecturer

December 27

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

A dramatic reading in Middle and Modern English

Mary Hamel, Guest Lecturer, and Deirdre Larkin, Lecturer

December 28, 1 and 3 PM
Piffaro: Free concert



REPORTS

July Report

We had 15 volunteers that participated in the July beautification session. This was a roving maintenance project we started doing some heavy duty trash and grub removal around the perimeter of Margaret Corbin Circle. Then we proceeded on to the path to the east of Billings Lawn all the way to just south of the Cloister's Lawn, then looped back along Margaret Corbin Drive and up the path on the west side of the Cafe Lawn. Along the way we removed vines and ivy off of walls and trees, removed weeds and over growth around benches, pruned trees and scrubs and collected trash. Then we proceeded to the main promenade east of the Heather Garden where we reached deep behind the settees (elevated benches) and removed loads of rubbish.

All in all, a very productive day.

September Report

We raked what seemed like tons of leaves. We also did some very necessary weeding and repainting of the volleyball court lines on the Subway Terrace.

October Report

There were 15 volunteers who planted 200 Jetfire narcissus, 100 Scilla siberica, 125 Hyacinths in Pink, Carnegie White and Delft Blue, 100 Tulips, 150 Muscari Armenicum, 150 Anemones Blanda, 100 Blue Scilla Campanula. All of these were planted in and around the Abby Lawn area. In addition we cleared ivy and other evasive plants off portions of the outer walls of the Linden Terrace, weeded, raked more leaves and removed trash.

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Your Ad Here

If you would like to place an ad in our Gazette, call (212) 942-6220

Contacts

FFTP website: <http://www.hhoc.org/fftp>

FFTP phone: (212) 927-7174

FFTP email: friendsofftp@aol.com

To volunteer at Heather Garden:
(212) 795-1388

Fort Tryon Park on the Internet:
www.nyc.gov/parks

The Cloisters:
(212) 923-3700 or www.metmuseum.org

New Leaf Cafe:

(212) 568-5323

To report an emergency (vandalism, dangerous conditions): 1-(800) 201-PARK.

To report graffiti: (212) 304-2278 (ask for Danny)
Forestry (tree pruning, dead tree and limb removal): (212) 860-8144

Council Member:

Robert Jackson (212) 928-1322

Speaker of the City Council:

Gilford Miller (212) 535-5554

Manhattan Parks Commissioner:

William Castro (212) 408-0201
william.castro@parks.nyc.gov

NYC Parks and Recreation Commissioner:

Adrian Benepe (212) 360-8111

Resources



Have You Visited Oasis?

There is a great new web site that is full resources on New York City's open spaces called Oasis at www.oasis-nyc.net. The site is intended to enhance the stewardship of

open space for the benefit of New Yorkers by providing comprehensive and detailed information about the "green infrastructure" of the city. It also includes information about neighborhood trees and the urban canopy in several neighborhoods. Oasis is based on the belief that a common, free, open space inventory accessible to anyone on the internet is invaluable to NYC's greening and planning communities.

Friends of Fort Tryon Park, Inc.
c/o Fort Tryon Jewish Center
524 Fort Washington Avenue
New York, NY 10033

Make every day Earth Day! Keep Washington Heights Clean!

Mark Your Calendar! Town Forums

New Yorkers for Parks is sponsoring Park Forms (Town Hall Meetings) for each borough. At these meetings residents will be able to express their ideas about for the Park's next 10-year capital construction plan. The Manhattan meeting is scheduled for February 26, 2004 at the Urban Center's Gallery Room, 457 Madison Avenue between 50th and 51st Streets (6:30 - 8:00PM). To register for the meeting please call 212-838-9410 ext 238 or ajones@ny4p.org Mark your calendar!

A Park with Past

James Renner is Historian for Community District 12, which includes Washington Heights and Inwood. Renner is a native New Yorker and has been living in Washington Heights since 1973. Articles by him can be viewed on the website of the Hudson Heights Owner's Coalition (www.hhoc.org).

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