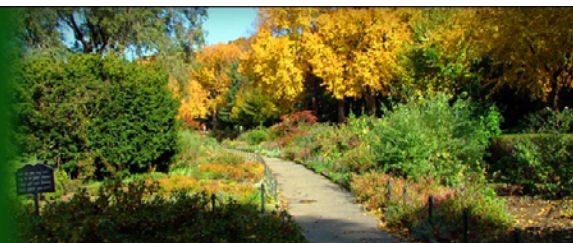


Gazette

Friends Committee of the Fort Tryon Park Trust



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The Buzz on Bees

Nancy Bruning

Bees become a fuzzy memory in colder weather, but as you stir sweet, luscious honey into your steaming hot tea or smooth it onto an apple, here's food for thought about honeybees and all their cousins.

Bees are specialized insects called pollinators. The pollen they gather provides their larvae with essential nutrients and protein and the nectar provides sugar for energy. When some bees go food shopping, they comb grains of pollen into a "basket" on their legs; other bees rely on the electrostatic charge on their fuzzy parts, which helps the pollen adhere. The bees' unique tongue allows them to suck nectar and then store it in their throats until they get back to the hive, where they transform it into honey. In spring and summer, as they travel from flower to flower, they spread pollen, which helps plants—among them many flowers, apples, almonds, cranberries, melons, tomatoes, and squash—reproduce.

Most Vant to Bee Alone

When most of us think of bees, we think of honeybees. Honeybees are highly social; they live in colonies or hives consisting of a single fertile queen, thousands of sterile female worker bees, and a few males, called drones. Once the drones have

mated with the queen, they die, and she lays eggs—up to 2,000 a day. Worker bees collect the nectar, produce honey, and store it along with the pollen in sheets of honeycomb made of beeswax, which is secreted by glands on the workers' abdomens. Honeybees, which have been imported into the United States, are called "cultivated bees" because they have been cultivated to produce honey and beeswax for commercial use.

The vast majority of bee species in the United States, including the Heather Garden, are native and classified as "primitively social" bees or "solitary" bees. They are the sweat bee (halictid), which is

The most common bees found in the Heather Garden are (from top) the bumblebee, leaf cutter bee, sweat bee (halictid), and carpenter bee. The general perception is that bees are dangerous, that they swarm, and will sting you. The truth is, bees will sting you only as a last resort; some don't even have stingers. (Photos 1–3: Mike Feller; photo 4: Aliza Holtz, © 2007 Holtz Communications, Inc.)

primitively social, and the bumblebee, carpenter bee, leaf cutter bee, and mason bee, which are solitary. Primitively social bee colonies generally consist of several dozen bees, but they may contain up to several hundred individuals at the height of their summer cycle. The workers, drones, and old queens die off in the fall, and the new queens disperse and hibernate. Solitary bees operate independently—a female builds her own nest, in holes in dead wood or tunnels in the ground, and is responsible for producing the food to feed her larvae. Solitary bees don't make honey or beeswax. Primitively social bees make small amounts, but they pollinate more of our wild plants and food crops than do honeybees.

Where Is Thy Sting?

Some bees have stingers that inject venom. Honeybees have barbed stingers that stick into your skin and tear away from the bee's body, killing the bee in the process. They are, in a sense, programmed to be "cannon fodder" that will die for the sake of the hive. Primitively social and solitary bees are slower to sting or even stingless, because they have small social structures and colonies, if any, and therefore little or nothing to defend. Generally, the bees in the Heather Garden won't sting you if you leave them be. However, it's common sense to stay away from swarms and bees' nests and, since they're attracted by perfume, hairspray, suntan lotion, and such, to avoid wearing these products when you visit places where there are bees. If a bee lands on you, just stay calm and stand still—chances are it will fly away on its own.

Bee Natural

Bees are vulnerable to parasites, bacterial diseases, bears, birds, other insects, and insecticides. Many species of wild pollinators have disappeared as their habitats have been destroyed or altered by human beings, and honeybees have been in the news of late because of colony collapse disorder, which has decimated many hives.

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Please note that the Friends Committee
has a new e-mail address:
friends@forttryonpark.net



Letter from Nancy: A Tribute to Jane Schachat

This is one of the hardest letters I will ever need to write, because in it I say goodbye to Jane Schachat, a dear friend and awesome colleague.

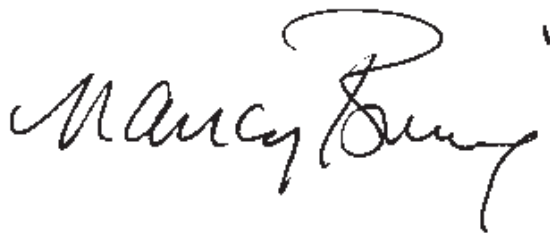
On July 31st, we paid tribute to Jane, the administrator, North Manhattan Parks, who, after 26 years of service to the Parks Department, officially announced her retirement. It was both a sad day and a happy day--sad because Jane was leaving and happy because she was getting a well deserved rest.

When Jane first announced her impending retirement at a Fort Tryon Park Trust board meeting, I cried. We both did. I knew I would miss her and all her soulful work on behalf of Fort Tryon Park. Although Jane was the administrator of all the parks in north Manhattan, from 155th Street to the Bronx, from river to river, I always thought of her as belonging to Fort Tryon Park—after all, she “lived” in the little cottage in the corner of the park, which is the administration building. Her tiny cluttered office overlooking the Hudson felt as “away” as you can get in New York City.

I remember one time I was chatting with Jane in her office when a thunderstorm broke out. Loud claps of thunder boomed all around us, and the sight through her window of the driving rain and crazy wind in the trees was something to behold--Biblical, even. And then, a really, really loud thunderclap (no counting to three, or five, or whatever you're supposed to count to calculate the distance), a crash, and suddenly we were engulfed in branches and leaves. One of the London plane trees in the circle had been struck by lightning and had fallen on the roof of the cottage. What an adventure—my life flashed before me, but who better to be trapped in greenery with than Jane, or where better than the little cottage in the woods?

Needless to say, we survived and at her goodbye gathering on Linden Terrace four years later, we listened to heartfelt speeches made by New York City Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe; Manhattan Parks Commissioner William Castro; Sarah Morgridge from Councilman Robert Jackson's office; Zead Ramadan, the former Chair of Community Board 12; and former councilman Stanley Michels. Presentations were made and I delivered my little speech and presented her with a lifetime membership in Friends. But Jane made the best speech of all as she talked about her early years working with the Parks Department, her love of Fort Tryon Park, the challenges of learning to drive a utility truck, and the genesis of the Fort Tryon Park Trust.

She's a tough act to follow.



Nancy Bruning
Chair, Friends Committee
Fort Tryon Park Trust

Letter from Edie

We were busy this summer encouraging new members to join the Trust, and during the Medieval Festival, we handed out thousands of membership cards and applications to record crowds. The Heather Garden has never looked lovelier, thanks in part to 1,000 new heathers planted in October. The gardeners are also beginning the planning and planting for the Winter Walk, a project funded by the Arthur Ross Foundation and named for the late Arthur Ross. In addition, consultations on architectural and landscape design and plumbing for the Alpine Garden have begun. Thanks to a major gift from the Peter Jay Sharp Foundation, this long untended area of Fort Tryon Park will be restored to its original beauty.

We are delighted that Fort Tryon Park was one of 40 sites selected by the City to be part of the 40th Anniversary of the Outdoor Art Program. The Laura Kuhn Monument Sculpture is located next to the Cloister Lawn and will be on-site for the next six months.

We're pleased to have had a part in making some of these beautifications possible.

Finally, we are proud that the park was host in August to a distinguished group of visitors from the International Downtown Association, thanks to Friends member George Sanchez.



Edie Kean
Co-Chair, Fort Tryon Park Trust



Jane Schachat recently retired as the administrator of North Manhattan Parks. (Photo: Nancy Bruning)

Parks Department Report

Jennifer Hoppa
Deputy Administrator,
North Manhattan Parks

During the summer, Parks Department staff began a series of improvements planned for the park's Broadway perimeter between the Anne Loftus Playground and Bennett Avenue. The sidewalk was repaved in October, and Parks plans to upgrade the benches and improve the street tree areas.

Also, in conjunction with numerous corporate and institutional volunteer groups, the Fort Tryon gardeners have been working to improve sight lines into and out of the park, removing overgrowth, and expanding lawn areas for the public to enjoy.

On Sunday, September 30th, more than 65,000 revelers from the tristate area attended the 23rd Annual Medieval Festival in Fort Tryon Park. Once again, the park was invaded by jugglers, jesters, jousters, human chessboards, birds of prey, damsels in décolletage-bearing costumes, a blacksmith, fresco painters, musicians, belly dancers, magicians, and vendors selling such authentic medieval fare as barbecued turkey legs (turkeys, a New World species, did not exist in Europe a thousand years ago). The success of the event



(above) Belly dancers delight an audience of Medieval Festival revelers. (far left) The Medieval Festival presents a chance for people to dress up in an array of costumes. (left) A medieval sprite displays her radiant smile. (Photo: Nancy Bruning)

was due in part to glorious autumn weather but as much or more to increased sponsorship, advertising—for the first time, the festival was advertised on MTA trains and buses throughout the city—more entertainment, and two jousting matches.



The Billings Estate

James Renner

One of the most prominent sites in what was to become Fort Tryon Park was the residence of industrialist Cornelius Kingsley Garrison Billings. A native of Chicago, Billings moved to New York City in 1901, after he retired as president of the People's Gas, Light and Coke Company, a family-owned utility, and took up residence at Fifth Avenue and 53rd Street.

In time he purchased 25 acres of land in northern Manhattan and built a home there. The property comprised several estates in the area. It extended north from what is

now Mother Cabrini Chapel and School to the Overlook Terrace within the park.

The Louis XIV mansion, which was completed in 190, was located on the highest point of the property, at 250 feet above sea level. The architect was Guy Lowell, and the grounds were landscaped by Charles Downing Lay. The building had private plumbing and a fire hose on each of the three floors. The estate included a pergola and a swimming pool.

The property could be accessed by carriage and automobile from what was then the northbound Riverside Drive via a 50-foot-high galleried driveway constructed of Maine granite. Retained as part of the park, it is the basis of one of the many overlooks for Fort Tryon Park. You can walk down the driveway, made of fire-baked bricks, which can be seen from Henry Hudson Parkway.

In 1917, John D. Rockefeller bought the property from Billings for \$35,000 an acre, with the intention of donating it to city for a public park. Meanwhile, the building was destroyed by fire in 1925. In 1927, Rockefeller hired Frederick Law Olmstead Jr., the principal partner of the Olmstead Brothers, to turn the property into a park, which was completed in October 1935 and donated to New York City.

The mansion gained literary attention when it was used as the basis for a fictional estate in the book *The Dragon Murder Case* by S. S. Van Dine, published in 1925. The story involves detective Philo Vance solving a mysterious murder by a dragon at the Stamm Estate in Inwood Hill Park. In addition, the site of the mansion was used as a location for the film *Coogan's Bluff* starring Clint Eastwood.

Northern Manhattan Parks Activities

In November, we have our annual **Commemoration of the Battle of Fort Washington**. This will be the 231st anniversary of this famous Revolutionary War battle. And one of Fort Washington's outer defenses was located in our very own Fort Tryon Park. Here, members of the Brigade of the American Revolution will set up camp and help you travel back in time. See demonstrations of how the Continental Army functioned during America's War for Independence. In addition, representatives from Dyckman Farmhouse Museum will exhibit photographs from archaeological digs of the area that took place during the early 20th century. Bring the kids for arts and crafts and see live musket demonstrations.

And remember, you can **sign up for the Parks Department's e-mail newsletter about northern Manhattan parks**. Go to www.NorthManhattanParks.org. On the right-hand side, click on "Sign up for emails about North Manhattan Parks" programs and events, fill in your e-mail address and name, scroll down and select "North Manhattan Parks" and any other information you want to receive, then click on "Subscribe to Parks Newsgroups" at the bottom. Soon you will receive e-mail asking you to confirm that you wish to subscribe. You must respond to this e-mail to activate your subscription. (Your name and e-mail address will not be sold or shared with any other group or organization.) You can also check the Web site for last-minute program details, changes, and additional information about all northern Manhattan parks.

Remember, too, that you can subscribe to **Outdoors in New York City, a free newspaper of outdoor adventure**. Published quarterly and available by mail or e-mail, Outdoors in New York City can keep you current on events and activities in city parks, as well as in national and state parks within the city limits. Subscribe by calling 866-692-4295; or go to www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers, click on one of the links at the bottom of the page to download or subscribe. Readers are invited to submit stories describing how the Parks Department's activities have enhanced the quality of their life in New York City.

Regular, Ongoing Events

Heather Garden Walking Tours are held **every Sunday 1:00 to 2:00 PM through November 25**, weather permitting. Learn about the plants and history of Fort Tryon Park and Heather Garden from a member of the Parks Department's expert horticultural staff. The tour meets at the start of the Heather Garden.

Fitness Walking occurs year-round, **every Tuesday and Thursday 7:30 to 8:30 AM and Sunday 8:30 to 9:30 AM**. The hour-long class includes a 10-minute warm-up; a 30-minute fitness walk; and 20 minutes of strengthening, stretching, and cool-down. It meets at the start of the Heather Garden. Sponsored by the Friends Committee of the Fort Tryon Park Trust and the North Manhattan Parks Administrator's Office, the program is free, but advance registration is required; contact healthwriter2@aol.com.

Inwood and Fort Tryon Park Nature Walks with Mike Feller, the Parks Department's chief naturalist, are conducted **every Saturday 8:00 to 10:00 AM**. They will continue through November 10th in Inwood Hill Park and end on November 17th in Fort Tryon Park, so if you haven't yet been on one of Mike's

NOVEMBER

3 Mike Feller's Inwood Nature Walk, 8:00–10:00 AM, Inwood Hill Park (enter the park at 218th Street and Indian Road and walk to the little bridge before the Nature Center). Bring binoculars and a field guide if you wish.

10 Mike Feller's Inwood Nature Walk, 8:00–10:00 AM. Inwood Hill Park.

11 Commemoration of the 231st Anniversary of the Battle of Fort Washington, 12:00 PM–3:00 PM, Fort Tryon Park. Meet on the Café Lawn.

17 Mike Feller's Final Fort Tryon Nature Walk of the 2007 Season, 8:00–10:00 AM. Fort Tryon Park. Meet at the entrance to the Heather Garden.

DECEMBER

5 Sidney Horenstein's History of the New York City Water Supply System, 6:30–8:30 PM, J. Hood Wright Park Recreation Center (174th Street and Fort Washington Avenue). New York City and some parts of upstate communities use 1.3 billion gallons of water per day. This lecture, presented by Sidney Horenstein, geologist and educator emeritus at the American Museum of Natural History and illustrated with slides, will show how the water supply system of New York City, one of the world's great engineering works, developed from the earliest Dutch times to the present.

9 RING's Holiday Tree and Menorah Lighting and Song, 4:30–6:30 PM,

The Riverside-Inwood Neighborhood Garden (at the confluence of Broadway, Dyckman Street, Riverside Drive and Seaman Avenue). Refreshments will be served. And if you can, join in the tree decoration the day before at 11:00 AM. Rain date on Sunday. Contact Maggie at (212) 567-8272 if in doubt about the weather.

walks, now's your chance to get one in before the season ends. Mike, a highly respected naturalist, has made many contributions to the preservation and restoration of New York's natural areas. His morning walks offer great opportunities to see migrating songbirds and to learn how the ecosystems of Inwood Hill Park and Fort Tryon Park influence which plants and animals can thrive there.

Also, **Winter Walks in Fort Tryon Park** will begin in December. Dates and times will be announced.

NOTE: The listings are subject to change. Check the Fort Tryon Park or the North Manhattan Parks Web site, www.ftpt.org or www.northmanhattanparks.org, for updates (click on "Events Calendar" at the upper-right side of the page). You can also click on the appropriate link to see what's in bloom at the Heather Garden.

Do We Have Your Current E-mail Address?

If you are receiving a paper copy of this newsletter, it means that you have requested it, that we do not have your e-mail address, or that your e-mail address has changed. If you wish to receive this newsletter by e-mail or if you wish to receive or continue to receive e-mail notices of local park events, please send your current e-mail address to Friends@FortTryonPark.net.

Friends of Fort Tryon Park

MEMBERSHIP FORM

YES I want to ___renew ___become a member of the Friends Committee of Fort Tryon Park and the Fort Tryon Park Trust!

Name Date

Address Apt.#

City, State Zip Code (+4)

Home Phone Work Phone

E-mail

PLEASE SELECT A MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

- Basic Membership \$15/year Subscription to Gazette
- Student/Sr. Citizen \$ 5/year Subscription to Gazette
- Family/Supporter \$30/year Gazette plus T-shirt
- Business Sponsor \$50/year Gazette, T-shirt, plus Certificate suitable for framing
- Additional Donation \$_____ Acknowledgment in Gazette

T-shirt size:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Small	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium
<input type="checkbox"/> Large	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra Large
<input type="checkbox"/> No T-shirt, thanks.	

I DO / DO NOT wish to be informed of neighborhood-based events that may not be directly related to Fort Tryon Park.

I WOULD LIKE TO BE CONTACTED AS A VOLUNTEER TO:

- Garden and maintain plants
 - Clean, paint, remove graffiti
 - Host membership table
 - Plan events
 - Post flyers
 - Help with mailings
 - Contribute to newsletter
- Other ways I would like to participate:

Please make checks payable to Friends of Fort Tryon Park, Inc. and mail to:

Gwendolyn Boey-Augesnblick
Membership Coordinator
255 Cabrini Blvd, Apt. 4H
New York, NY 10040

All contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

Suns & Moons

Suns

Sunrises and Sunsets

	Sunrise	Sunset
November 1	6:26 AM (EST)	4:52 PM (EST)
December 1	7:00 AM (EDT)	4:29 PM (EDT)
January 1	7:20 AM (EDT)	4:39 PM (EDT)

Moons

Full Moons (EDT)

November 24, 9:30 AM—Full Beaver Moon
 December 23, 8:16 PM—Full Cold Moon
 January 22, 8:35 AM—Full Wolf Moon

New Moons (EDT)

November 9, 6:03 PM
 December 9, 12:40 PM
 January 8, 6:37 AM

Daylight Savings Time ends November 4, 2:00 AM
 Mars goes retrograde 3:24 AM November 15–January 30
 Winter solstice occurs at 1:08 AM December 22

Sources: U.S. Naval Observatory and *Farmers' Almanac* 2007.

July Beautification Report

Mike Klein

On July 29th, a day of unpredictable weather, nine volunteers participated in the beautification activities. We removed English ivy from several London plane trees in Margaret Corbin Circle; otherwise after a period of time the ivy would grow to the point that it would actually strangle the tree. We also cleared the bronze Margret Corbin memorial at the entrance to Margret Corbin Drive of English ivy and cleaned it, so that it can now be viewed again. In Margret Corbin Circle, we also removed garbage and raked leaves, and we replaced a trash receptacle that was missing from the entrance to the park. In the northeast planting bed in the upper subway terrace, we removed hanging vines and weeds, cut back the English ivy to behind the hoop railings, and raked leaves.

In addition, we had an impromptu meeting with our Marechal Brown, the new director of horticulture for North Manhattan Parks. We gave her a brief summary of the tasks Friends has been working on over the past 20-odd years, as well as of ongoing and future projects, including a wish list. It was a great start in working together, and we wish Marechal great success in her new job.

If You Like Yellow

We have 3,000 daffodil bulbs waiting to go in the ground as part of the Broadway Promenade beautification initiative in Fort Tryon Park. Bulbs will be planted between Bennett Avenue and the Anne Loftus Playground at Dyckman Street. Marechal Brown, director of horticulture for North Manhattan Parks, is planning on working with various volunteer groups for the planting. If you would like to participate in some way, please contact Marechal at 212-795-1388 (cottage) or 917-797-0654 (mobile).



The Buzz about Bees

Continued from page 1

Because they are such effective pollinators, bees play a crucial role in the worldwide ecology of crops, natural flora, and the human food supply, as well as in land, water, and animal resources. As the Parks Department's Mike Feller, points out, most often conservation is therefore justified on economic and ecological terms.

"What gets subsumed is the sense of joy when we experience bees," Mike says. "Once you get over your fear of them, you appreciate their beauty—halictids, for example, are like little jewels—and the mystery of how well they have evolved and adapted."

One bright day in the Cloisters, I decided to test his unbelievable claim that local bees are gentle, docile, and "pettable." I cautiously stroked a bee with my fingertip. My incredulous 18-year-old companion followed suit. Neither one of us got stung. Instead, we felt only a warm, sunny sense of wonder.

Heartfelt thanks to Mike Feller, chief naturalist for the Parks & Recreation Department's Natural Resources Group, for his input and photos. Mike leads Nature Walks in Inwood Hill Park and Fort Tryon Park (see "Northern Manhattan Parks," page 4).

Contacts

- Friends Committee Web site: www.hhoc.org/fftp
- Friends Committee phone: 212-927-7174
- Friends Committee e-mail: friends@forttryonpark.net
- To volunteer in the Heather Garden: 212-795-1388
- Council Member Robert Jackson: 212-928-1322
- Speaker of the City Council Christine Quinn: 212-788-6979 or 212-564-7757
- Manhattan Parks Commissioner William Castro: 212-408-0201, or william.castro@parks.nyc.gov
- NYC Parks and Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe: 212-360-8111
- To report an emergency (vandalism, dangerous conditions): 800-201-PARK
- To report graffiti: 212-304-2278 (ask for Danny)
- Forestry (tree pruning, dead tree and limb removal): 212-860-8144
- For information on Fort Tryon Park: www.nycgovparks.org
- For information on the Cloisters: 212-923-3700 or www.metmuseum.org
- The New Leaf Café: 212-568-5323
- For permissions and forms: www.nycgovparks.org/sub_permits_and_applications/permits_and_applications.html

Mission Statement

The Friends Committee of the Fort Tryon Park Trust aims to involve the entire community surrounding the park in maintaining and improving the park's appearance and condition, and promoting its constructive use by the public. The Friends' structure and programs are designed to achieve these goals in partnership with other groups with similar concerns. Such involvement and cooperation should help solidify and enliven this community, and make it and the park more attractive, safe, and desirable.

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Some bees sting, but often the culprit is the European wasp, which is often mistaken for a bee. (Photo: Flagstaffotos)

Friends Committee of the Fort Tryon Park Trust

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