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How Does the Woodpecker Peck Wood?

Aliza Holtz, Ph.D.

The rrrrat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat heard in the wooded areas of Fort Tryon Park is the familiar and unmistakable sound of a woodpecker boring a hole in a tree. Two of the several types of woodpeckers in the park are the red-bellied woodpecker and the downy woodpecker.

The red-bellied woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*) is more easily identified by the markings on its head and back than those on its belly, for which it is named. The small pinkish wash on the belly can be seen only under optimal conditions. In addition to the fine black-and-white barred pattern on the wings and back, the male red-bellied woodpecker has a large red patch, resembling a hood, covering the top and back of its head, whereas the female has a smaller patch on only the back of its head. In winter, the northernmost birds might fly to a more southern part of the range. (You can listen to the calls and drums of the red-bellied woodpecker at http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/audio/Red-bellied_Woodpecker.html and see a short video of a male red-bellied woodpecker with calls at http://ibc.hbw.com/ibc/phtml/votacio.phtml?idVideo=9943&Melanerpes_carolinus.)

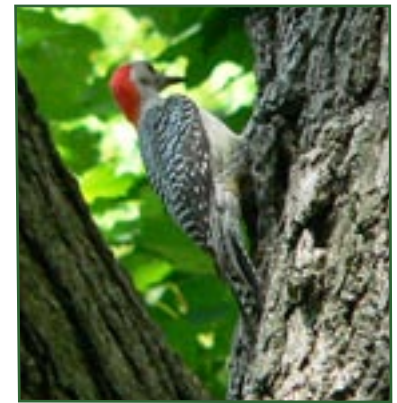
The downy woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) has an extremely wide range that includes most of North America from Alaska to Florida. This smallest of woodpeckers has adapted to habitats from wilderness forests to urban backyards, where it takes advantage of bird feeders. Its upper parts are mostly black, but the center of the back is white; it has white stripes on its face separated by a black band that circles the head from eye to eye, a black line down the back of the neck, white spots on its wings, and a white or grayish underside. The patch on the back of the head is red in males and black in females. Because it is so small, the downy woodpecker can obtain foods that larger ones cannot; for example, they can cling to goldenrod galls and eat the gall fly larvae. (You can listen to the sounds of the downy woodpecker at http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/audio/Downy_Woodpecker.html.)

How can woodpeckers repeatedly and rapidly hammer into such hard surfaces without incurring brain damage? The adaptations these birds have for this and other functions are simply astounding!

To collect insects such as grubs or wood-boring beetles from trees—insects are a mainstay of the woodpecker's diet—the bird uses its hard, chisel-like bill to peck at wood with a somewhat rotated head, causing the chips to fly off to the side. Research at the University of Montana indicates that the force of the impact of its brain against the inner walls of the skull is distributed over a surface area that is relatively large area given the small volume of the brain, and this, together with the small volume the brain, which limits rotational forces, leaves the woodpecker's brain perhaps 50 to 100 times less vulnerable to impact injuries than the human brain.

Another adaptation is that the brain fits very snugly inside the skull, because the woodpecker has very little cerebrospinal fluid (the fluid that cushions the brain and spinal cord from the surrounding bone structure), so there is relatively less movement of the brain in relation to the skull and therefore little risk of injury.

The woodpecker's brain is protected, too, by transmission of much of the force of the impact to the areas of the skull that are thickest and most dense; these, in turn, transmit the force of the impact to the neck, with its thick musculature, and not to the brain. In some woodpeckers, modified joints between certain bones in the skull and upper jaw, together with the attached muscles, also absorb the force of the impact.



The female red-bellied woodpecker, shown here, has a red patch on the back of its head, in contrast to the male, which has a larger patch covering both the top and back of its head.

Photo © 2008 Holtz Communications, Inc.

continued on page 8

Renew Your Membership Now!

To save costs, we send out only one reminder per year; this is it. Please take this opportunity (and enjoy the convenience of the enclosed membership form and pre-addressed envelope) to renew your membership, unless you just joined us this year. Check your address label to find out your expiration date. Anyone who has a date earlier than 2008, please renew now.

Inside This Issue

How Does the Woodpecker Peck Wood?	1
Letter from Nancy	2
Letter from Edie and Joseph	2
Parks Department Report	2
Let's Hear It for the Volunteers!	3
Northern Manhattan Parks & Related Activities	4
Annual Report	4
Membership Form	follows p. 4
Suns, Moons, & More	6
Beautification Report	7
Contacts, Gazette Staff	8

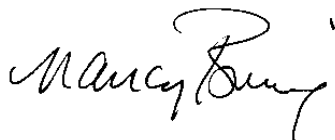
Letter from Nancy: Living Life Alfresco

As I write this, I've just come back home from a breakfast stroll in Fort Tryon Park with my friend and neighbor Mary Northridge. We decided it was to be a BYOB get-together—"B" standing for "breakfast." She brought fruit and yogurt; I brought homemade oatmeal in my coffee thermos. The point is, eating in the park doesn't have to be a big special-occasion picnic; it can be modest and ordinary. The other point is, we can do so many things outside in beautiful natural surroundings.

Mary and I both are in the public health field, and we work very hard and long hours on ways to help people be healthier. Caught up in such an important mission, we sometimes forget that we're people too. If we struggle with finding time to take care of ourselves, how much more difficult is it for other folks? But in having our get-together as a walk and a meal in the park, we made it happen.

When I visit friends and relatives in Europe, we spend lots of time outdoors, walking, eating, talking, looking; the kids are outside playing physical games at least as much as they're indoors playing video games. Most of us don't have our own backyards, but we instead have the luxury of a communal backyard in the form of a large, beautiful public park. How many things can you do in the park? How about reading, knitting, stretching, sketching, painting, writing? How about dreaming, thinking? How about simply looking, listening, and smelling? The more time we spend there, the healthier we'll be—and the park will be safer and full of life.

See you in the park,



Nancy Bruning
Chair, Friends Committee
Fort Tryon Park Trust

Save the Dates!

COMMITTEE EVENTS

The Friends Committee of the Fort Tryon Park Trust will be holding two fundraising events this spring. Please save the dates and plan to come. Last year's events were well attended and plenty of fun!

- May 29, 6:30–9:00 PM: A Toast to Fort Tryon (wine tasting)
- June 8, 11:00 AM–4:00 PM: Pancakes in the Park and Neighborhood Yard Sale

See "Northern Manhattan Parks & Related Activities," p. 5, for details.

BEAUTIFICATION DATES

- May 17, It's My Park Day, 10:00 AM–2:00 PM
- June 29, Broadway Cleanup Day, 10:00 AM–2:00 PM

See "Beautification Report," p. 7, for details.

Letter from Edie and Joseph

Spring greetings from the Board of the Fort Tryon Park Trust! We hope you've wintered over as well as the Heather Garden has and are as busy planning for the warm months as are the park's gardeners. One very good piece of news since the winter Gazette is that the Cleveland Dodge Foundation has donated \$50,000 to reinstate water service along the eastern edge of the Park. Many thanks to Jennifer Hoppa and the Parks Department for helping secure this essential grant, which will not only support the installation of the Alpine Garden and other plantings on the Broadway side of the park, but will also provide for needed drinking fountains.

Behind the scenes, the Trust is working with a specialist to overhaul its database and improve our capacity for outreach. We've also been pursuing partnerships to expand programming and public events in the park. We hope you'll enjoy the fruits of our labor this spring and summer.

Although it's a year away, the Trust's Benefit Committee has begun discuss next year's major fundraising event, which will be held in the spring of 2009. We're starting to consider honorees, venue, chairmen, and the like. We'll keep you posted as we make progress on these fronts. In the meantime, we welcome your ideas.

Enjoy the park and the beautiful spring weather, which we hope we'll see a lot of. See you at the Wine Tasting on May 29th, if not before.




Edie Kean and Joseph Pierson
Co-Chairs, Fort Tryon Park Trust

Parks Department Report

Jennifer M. Hoppa
Administrator, Northern Manhattan Parks

It's been a glorious spring thus far. As I walk through the park and watch the season's beauty unfold, my spirits are lifted and I think, am I in heaven? We are so fortunate to have the jewel of Fort Tryon Park and also the years of community support that have helped preserve and renew it.

Spring has sprung and we have already sheared the heathers with the North American Heather Society, hosted Hands On New York Day along the Broadway Promenade (the new name of the interior path along the Broadway side of the park), and begun construction on three segments of pathway around the dog run. What's more, we've secured a \$50,000 grant from the Cleveland Dodge Foundation, which will enable us to reinstate water service along the Broadway side of the park, allowing us to undertake horticultural restoration and reinstate historic stone drinking fountains; in addition, the Friends Committee and corporate and civic groups have partnered with the Parks Department to begin reclaiming the Broadway side. Stroll along the promenade throughout the spring and see the ever-expanding lawns, improved sightlines, and new plantings.

Let's Hear It for the Volunteers!

Marechal Brown
 Director of Horticulture, Northern Manhattan Parks

While our friends, neighbors, and visitors are enjoying spring meandering through Fort Tryon Park's myriad of pathways, those of us dressed in green are busier than ever. The first hint of daffodils emerging out of the ground is a herald of things to come. It's not just our gardens emerging from their winter hiatus; volunteers too are sprouting up all over our park!

Many people associate Fort Tryon Park with the Heather Garden. We have trained individual volunteers that regularly join our staff in the garden's ongoing maintenance. Throughout the rest of the park's 67 acres, individuals, corporate groups, civic organizations, and student groups have contributed to major improvements to the Broadway Promenade, the historic Billings Entrance, the north woods and slopes, the Anne Loftus Playground, and the subway terrace.

Since March, student groups from our neighborhood, our city, and from out of state have gotten their hands dirty weeding,



Students from the Muskota New School, being trained in invasive plant removal and woodland restoration on the east side of the park by Manhattan team members of the GreenApple Corps, pull Norway maple seedlings out of the woodlands. (Photo by Marechal Brown)

clearing, cleaning, raking, seeding, and planting. Last week we hosted two preschool groups from the YM & YWHA of Washington Heights, who delighted in planting pansies in the Anne Loftus Playground. GreenApple Corps, a Parks Department restoration team led by Jose Baez, a lifetime resident of the neighborhood, has introduced local elementary school children to the hands-on process of bringing back the vitality of our woodlands.

When I welcome our volunteers to Fort Tryon Park,

I ask them if they've been to the park before. It is astonishing how few are familiar with this treasure in Northern Manhattan. Having visited for the first time and invested time and energy into making lasting improvements to our parkland, they are destined to return.

In addition to the steadfast work of the Parks Department and the Friends Committee, hundreds of people contribute their time and energy to the park each year. You might not spot them on your strolls through the gardens and woodlands

or your visits to the playgrounds, but you can see the impact of their efforts. Our greening initiatives this spring could not have been realized without the efforts of hundreds of volunteers, including the following:

- Columbia University students and alumni
- The Muskota New School
- New York Cares
- 92 Street Y's Teensgiving Program
- Northeast Heather Society
- Our Lady Queen of Martyrs School
- University of Miami, Ohio, students
- YM & YWHA of Washington Heights

In fact, the volunteer spirit is alive and well in all the Northern Manhattan parks. And I dare say it benefits not only our parks, but our communities as well. The volunteers also gain a great deal from the experience. I should know: I was a volunteer once, and that experience led me to a career change to Parks after my humble beginnings digging in the soil, planting, and raking leaves in my neighborhood park in Brooklyn. If you're interested in enlisting your company, civic group, or co-op board for an improvement project in the park, contact me at marechal.brown@parks.nyc.gov. If you want to test out volunteering, for a few hours or just one, come out and join us at one of the Friends Committee's regular beautification days. See the Beautification Report, p. 7, for upcoming dates! ■



Preschool children from the YM-YWHA of Washington Heights plant pansies at the Anne Loftus Playground. (Photo by Marechal Brown)

Parks Department Report

In response to comments from the Friends Committee and area civic groups, two park enforcement officers in training have been assigned to Fort Tryon Park this spring to help preserve public safety. Introduce yourselves when you see them and let them know of any specific concerns you may have.

Spring isn't complete without "A Toast to Fort Tryon." Come out to this park fundraiser on May 29th on the Linden Terrace to sample an array of wonderful wines from around the world. And we hope you'll join us for a pancake brunch on June 8th. ■

\$2,000 Reward

ARBORCIDE

The Parks Department is offering a reward of \$2,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for cutting down 35 eastern red cedar trees in Inwood Hill Park, in the southwest quadrant near the Dyckman Fields, on or about March 7th.

Call the 34th Precinct, 212-927-0822, if you have any information.

Friends Committee of the Fort Tryon Park Trust 2007 Annual Report

Once again we had a busy year! Thanks also to the Parks Department's Marechal Brown and Jennifer Hoppa for their time and dedicated efforts to work with volunteer groups from all over the city (described on p. 3). Here's how the Friends programs helped beautify the park:

Planting and gardening

- Planted 1,000 bulbs in Margaret Corbin Circle and the upper subway terrace (paid for by membership dues and contributions)
- Continued to restore the southwestern rocky slope of Abby's Lawn, planting perennials, trimming back the English ivy, and installing a low-level fence on the southwestern edge
- Removed invasive ivy from the northeastern and northwestern walls of the Linden Terrace
- Removed English ivy from the London plane trees in Margaret Corbin Circle
- Cleared English ivy from the Margaret Corbin memorial plaque
- Removed hanging vines and weeds from the upper subway terrace
- Cut back English ivy behind the hoop railings in the upper subway terrace
- Cleared away invasive plants from the subway terrace
- Weeded, pruned shrubs, and removed dead branches in Margaret Corbin Circle and along the cast-iron fence on Fort Washington Avenue.
- Cleaned out the mud, dirt, and weeds from the stone drainage culvert on the slope of the lower subway terrace
- Cleared off the ivy on the stone walls and trees and pruned the bushes in Margaret Corbin Circle so that people can sit comfortably on the benches

Cleaning and maintenance

- Removed graffiti from the benches and the flagpole on the Linden Terrace
- Scraped and painted the cast-iron fence along Fort Washington Avenue
- Removed litter and trash from Margaret Corbin Circle and the subway terrace
- Scrubbed graffiti off the upper subway terrace stone walls and the new bulletin board at the southern entrance of the park
- Removed construction debris that had been dumped in the park
- Raked tons of leaves

Other activities

- Continued the free Sunset Yoga Program
- Continued the free Fitness Walking Program
- Sponsored an Earth Day Celebration
- Participated in It's My Park Day
- Attended Community Board meetings

VOLUNTEERS

Friends clocked over 1,200 hours of volunteer time this year! Thanks to all the volunteers who did their bit and contributed to the upkeep and continued improvement of our beloved park and garden. Gardeners and membership table hosts donated 250 hours of their time; Fitness Program volunteers, 150 hours;

volunteers for Administrative work and Events, 150 hours; and communications volunteers, 700 hours.

INCOME AND EXPENSES: A BALANCED BUDGET

Our annual income of \$20,000 is divided equally among revenue from memberships and other donations, and grants from foundations, and grants from the New York City Council (thank you, Councilman Robert Jackson!).

Our expenses of \$20,000 are divided approximately evenly in thirds among expenses for beautification, fitness programs, and administrative tasks.

Officers

Chair: Nancy Bruning

Vice Chair, Parks Liaison & Beautification:
Mike Klein

Vice Chair, Cultural Outreach Coordinator:
Rosa Naparstek

Treasurer: Jack Murad

Secretary: Winnie Richman

Membership Coordinator:
Gwendolyn Boey-Augenblick

Resource and Policy Coordinator:
Francisco Menendez

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.

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:

- | | | |
|--|-----------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic Membership | \$15/year | Subscription to Gazette |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student/Sr. Citizen | \$ 5/year | Subscription to Gazette |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family/Supporter | \$30/year | Gazette plus T-shirt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Sponsor | \$50/year | Gazette, T-shirt, plus Certificate suitable for framing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 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

Other ways I would like to participate:

Clean, paint, remove graffiti

Host membership table

Plan events

Post flyers

Help with mailings

Contribute to newsletter

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

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

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

Northern Manhattan Parks & Related Activities

Now that spring has arrived, Northern Manhattan Parks offer even more free public programs. We are especially pleased to introduce a new series of **Children's Naturalist Programs**, designed especially for children ages 4 to 12 and conducted by Shelley Volk, environmental educator. Children will have fun with hands-on exploration of the natural world found in their local park. Topics include birds, trees, seeds, insects, geology, and Native Americans. An adult must accompany children. Space is limited and registration is required. Program availability varies by park. Please call or e-mail Linda Huntington for more information at 212-795-1388 or Linda.Huntington@parks.nyc.gov. Only heavy rains cancel the programs.

The Parks Department is launching **Highbridge "Summer Sprint" Evening Cross-Country Races**. The races, which will actually be held starting in May on Highbridge Mountain Bike Trail, are modeled after the "Loonie" races in Whistler, B.C., are an early-season "warm-up" to encourage riders to get out on the trails and in shape for the summer. More information about Highbridge Bike Trail programs will be available soon.

The **Inwood Shakespeare Festival** returns with **Summer 2008: The Season of Love & Justice**. It will present Shakespeare's classic play of tragic love, *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Ted Minos, **Tuesday through Friday evenings June 4–7, 11–14, and 17–20, 7:30 PM**, on the Peninsula in Inwood Hill Park.

The **Scandinavian Music Festival with the Scandia Symphony** likewise returns. The orchestra will perform wonderful Scandinavian music in a delightful alfresco setting **the last three Saturday afternoons in June**.

And let's not forget **The Cloisters**, in Fort Tryon Park. It presents **gallery talks** and **gallery workshops for families**. The gallery talks and the gallery workshops for families, which are for children ages 4 through 12 and their families, are free with museum admission. No reservations are necessary, but gallery space is limited. For information about the talks and the workshops, call 212-650-2280. The museum presents special seasonal programs, as well, also free with museum admission; consult the museum's calendar at www.metmuseum.org/cloisters/events/.

Regular Events

The **Fitness Walking Program** meets every **Tuesday and Thursday 7:30–8:30 AM** and **Saturdays 8:30–9:30 AM** (with an optional additional walk to the Green Market on Isham Avenue). The meeting place is at the entrance to the Heather Garden. These are hour-long classes with a 10-minute warm up; 30-minute fitness walk; and 20 minutes of strengthening, stretching, and cool-down. All levels of fitness are welcome. The program, cosponsored by the Friends Committee of the Fort Tryon Park Trust, is free, but advance registration is required; contact healthwriter2@aol.com.

Heather Garden Walking Tours take place every **Sunday at 1:00 PM**. Learn about the plants and history of Fort Tryon Park and the Heather Garden from members of Parks' expert horticultural staff. On the first Sunday of the month, the walk will include the Alpine Garden.

The **Weekly Nature Walks with Mike Feller**, the chief natu-

ralist for the Parks Department, begin again on May 4th. They take place rain or shine, May through November, **every Sunday 8:00–10:00 AM** in **Inwood Park**, except the last Sunday of the month, when they are held in **Fort Tryon Park**. See migrating songbirds and learn how the ecosystems of Northern Manhattan parks influence which plants and animals can thrive here. In Inwood Park, meet at the small bridge on the east side of the salt marsh; enter the park at 218th Street and Indian Road and walk west toward the river. Fort Tryon Park walks meet at the entrance to the Heather Garden.

Free **Sunset Yoga** also begins again. It will be held Wednesday evenings from June 11 to August 6, 6:45–8 PM, in Fort Tryon Park on Abby's Lawn, adjacent to the Linden Terrace. Bring a yoga mat or towel. All levels are welcome. For more information, contact healthwriter2@aol.com or Linda Huntington at 212-795-1388.

NOTE: The listings are subject to change and new events may be added. Check the Northern Manhattan Parks' Web site, http://nycgovparks.org/sub_your_park/vt_north_manhattan_parks/vt_north_manhattan_parks.php, for updates (click on "Events Calendar" at the upper-right side of the latter page). In addition, you can [click on the appropriate link there to see what's in bloom at the Heather Garden](#).

MAY

3 Drums along the Hudson: A Native American Festival & Shad Fest, 11:00 AM–6:00 PM, Inwood Hill Park at 218 Street and Indian Road. A family-oriented festival, Drums along the Hudson is the only open-air powwow in Manhattan that includes exhibitions of world dance and drumming traditions, as well as a variety of global and Native American crafts and cuisine. It combines a celebration of Native American heritage, culture, and art with the diversity of New York City itself.

The Shad Fest, 11:00 AM–1:00 PM, celebrates the annual return of spawning shad to the Hudson River. It features shad planking demonstrations by Christopher Letts of the Hudson River Foundation and free tastings. The Urban Park Rangers will be on hand to welcome visitors with nature-themed games and activities for the whole family.

3 Spring Flea Market and Planting, 10:00 AM–4:00 PM, RING Garden (at the confluence of Dyckman Street, Broadway, Riverside Drive, and Seaman Avenue). Rain date May 10. Hosted by RING, the Parks Department, and Our Lady Queen of Martyrs School, the semi-annual flea market seeks to encourage reuse and recycling by neighborhood residents. You can also volunteer to help the RING Garden plant annuals. To sign up to be a vendor, contact Nancy Beltrez at 212-567-1971.

4 Sidney Horenstein's High Bridge Bottom to Top, 11:00 AM–3:00 PM, Highbridge Park. With massive geologic projections and historic sites such as the High Bridge and its water tower, Highbridge Park has many fascinating sites to see. Join Sidney Horenstein, geologist and educator emeritus at the American Museum of Natural History, for a south to north exploration of Highbridge Park. Wear comfortable shoes and bring water and a snack if you wish. Meet on the southeast corner of 155th Street and Amsterdam Avenue. Please note: this walk will end at Dyckman Street.

10 Children's Naturalist Program: Trees, 10:30 AM–12:00 PM, Inwood Hill Park. Why are trees so important to us? There are so many kinds and we use trees for so many different things. We'll discuss some of these uses and also learn why trees are important to birds and animals. Then we'll take a walk and see how many different kinds of trees we can find!

10 Children's Naturalist Program: Insects, 2:00–3:30 PM, Highbridge Park. Learn a lot about all kinds of insects including

butterflies. How many legs does an insect have? What makes their eyes so special? Look at plastic specimens and then take a walk to find some real ones to examine.

15 Highbridge "Summer Sprint" Evening Cross-Country Race, 7:00 PM. Highbridge Mountain Bike Trail. Meet at the trailhead on Fort George Avenue between Amsterdam and St. Nicholas Avenues.

17 Children's Naturalist Program: Insects, 10:30 AM–12:00 PM, Bennett Park. Learn a lot about all kinds of insects including butterflies! How many legs does an insect have? What makes their eyes so special? Look at plastic specimens and then take a walk to find some real ones to examine.

17 Children's Naturalist Program: Birds, 2:00 PM–3:30 PM, Anne Loftus Playground, Fort Tryon Park. What one thing do birds have that no other animals have? Find out the answer to that question and many others as we explore the world of our feathered friends. After examining bird artifacts, the attendees will do a little bird watching in the park.

17 Friends Committee Beautification Day 10:00 AM–2:00PM, Meet at the entrance to the Heather Garden, and join your friends and

neighbors to help in repainting the cast-iron fence along Fort Washington Avenue and the Ping-Pong tables, the benches, and the base of the flagpole on the subway terrace. Contact me at mkleinnyc@rcn.com for more information.

17 It's My Park Day, 10:00 AM–2:00 PM, parks throughout the city. Support your local park by pitching in on It's My Park Day plantings and cleanups.

17 2nd Annual Inwood Garlic Mustard Pull, 10:00 AM–2:00 PM, Inwood Hill Park. Meet at the Inwood Hill Nature Center and learn why we need to eradicate this alien species from our parklands. Then set out on the mission to take it out by the roots.

17 RING Gardening & Annual Members Meeting, 11:00 AM–2:00 PM, gardening; 3:00–5:00 PM, meeting; RING Garden (at the confluence of Dyckman Street, Broadway, Riverside Drive, and Seaman Avenue). The gardening will include planting, watering, and pruning annuals; weeding; and a special project, to lay brickwork around the lawn. The members meeting (membership is \$10 a year) is to elect officers, solicit membership on the RING planners' committee, and orient new members; it will be followed by a potluck dinner.

24–25 Family Festival at The Cloisters. The Cloisters presents a two-day event with programs for the entire family, including tours and gallery workshops in English and Spanish. Free with museum admission. Go to www.metmuseum.org/cloisters/events/ for information about specific programs.

29 Highbridge "Summer Sprint" Evening Cross-Country Race, 7:00 PM, Highbridge Mountain Bike Trail. Meet at the trailhead on Fort George Avenue between Amsterdam and St. Nicholas Avenues.

29 A Toast to Fort Tryon, 6:30–9:00 PM, Linden Terrace, Fort Tryon Park, rain or shine. Enjoy an evening of wine tasting, hors d'oeuvres, and live music at a fundraiser for the Friends' Committee. Tickets are \$25 at www.forttryonparktrust.org until May 27th. If space permits, tickets may be purchased for \$35 (cash or check only) at the door.

31 Children's Naturalist Program: Native Americans, 10:30 AM–12:00 PM, Inwood Hill Park—Two hundred years ago, Native Americans lived in Inwood Hill Park. Find out how they lived. What kind of houses did they build? How did they find food? What were their clothes like? Did the kids play games? Learn about all those things and see real Indian artifacts. Hike into the woods and see some of the areas where Native Americans might have lived.

31 Children's Naturalist Program: Seeds, 2:00–3:30 PM, Highbridge Park. What are seeds and why are they so important to plants and animals? How do seeds spread? Children will look at many different types of seeds and then hike around the park in search of the seeds found there.

31 La Experiencia Medieval: Talleres Educativos para la Familia en Español en Los Claustros—El Rey y la Reina del Castillo, 1:00–2:00 PM, Los Claustros. Por los niños entre los 4 y 12 años de edad y sus familias. Gratis con la admisión al museo. Nos reuniremos en la sala de recepción. Si desean obtener más información, por favor llamen al 212-396-5314.

Suns, Moons, & More

SUNS

	Sunrise	Sunset
May 1	5:54 AM	7:53 PM
June 1	5:26 AM	8:22 PM
July 1	5:28 AM	8:32 PM (

MOONS

New Moons

May 5, 12:19 PM
June 3, 3:23 PM
July 2, 10:19 AM

Full Moons

May 19th, 10:11 PM—Flower Moon
June 18th, 1:30 PM—Strawberry Moon
July 18th, 3:59 AM—Buck Moon*

METEOR SHOWERS

	Max. Activity	Hourly Rate	Direction & Time	Speed
Eta Aquarids	May 4–5	20–40	SE 2 to 4 AM	very swift, long paths
Delta Aquarids	July 28–29	15–25	S 1 to 3 AM	slow, long paths

OTHER EVENTS

Summer solstice occurs June 20 at 8:00 PM

*Also known as the Thunder Moon because thunderstorms are so frequent in July

Source: U.S. Naval Observatory and *Farmers' Almanac 2008*

JUNE

7–8 Garden Days at The Cloisters. This annual celebration of the gardens of The Cloisters has been expanded to a full week-end of programs. Events will focus on aromatic and scented plants used in all aspects of medieval life, from cooking and housekeeping to perfumery and religious rites. Garden tours and special talks will be offered and

staff will be on hand throughout both days to answer questions about medieval horticulture. "Making Sense of Scents," a program for children ages 4–12 and their families—will be presented in English and Spanish. A perfumer will give a talk and demonstration of medieval perfume making. Programs begin in the Main Hall. No reservations are necessary, but gallery space is limited. Free with museum admission. Go to www.metmuseum.org/cloisters/events/ for information about specific programs.

7 National Trails Day & Hike The Heights, time TBA, Highbridge Park. Take a two-mile hike around northern Manhattan, ending at Highbridge Park, with food, entertainment, and a tour of the water tower. Throughout the nation, concerned citizens join on National Trails Day to help restore trails.

8 3rd Annual Pancakes in the Park & The Neighborhood Yard Sale, 11:00 AM–1:00 PM, Fort Tryon Park, rain or shine. Help raise funds for the Friends' Committee by enjoying a pancake breakfast on The Linden Terrace and free activities for the whole family. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under 12 at www.forttryonparktrust.org and at the door. Space is limited. Tables for the yard sale, cost \$25 and must be reserved by June 2nd at www.forttryonparktrust.org. For more information, contact Linda Huntington at 212-795-1388 or Linda.Huntington@parks.nyc.gov.

9 A Children's Concert in Isham Park, 7:00 PM, Isham Park, in the sitting area at Seaman Avenue and Isham Street. Bring the kids and blanket to a classical concert for the whole family. Enjoy "The Unhappy Aardvark," "The Lion & The Mouse," "The Bassonist of Hamelin," and other selections arranged by Gil Dejean.

12 Highbridge "Summer Sprint" Evening Cross-Country Race, 7:00 PM, Highbridge Mountain Bike Trail. Meet at the trailhead on Fort George Avenue between Amsterdam and St. Nicholas Avenues.

12 Sidney Horenstein's If Manhattan Is Schist, It Wouldn't Be Gneiss, 6:00–8:00 PM, Fort Tryon Park. Join Sidney Horenstein for a leisurely stroll among the intriguing rock formations of Fort Tryon Park and learn why, although the Bronx is gneiss, it's nice to live on Manhattan's schist. Meet at the entrance to the park at Margaret Corbin Circle.

14 RING's 8th annual Art in the Garden art exhibition, 12:00–5:00 PM, RING Garden (at the confluence of Dyckman Street, Broadway, Riverside Drive, and Seaman Avenue). The event, curated by Liz Popiel, features musical performances by local artists. For more information, contact Liz at scenicdesigner@hotmail.com.

21 Make Music New York, 4 PM to dusk, RING Garden (at the confluence of Dyckman Street, Broadway, Riverside Drive, and Seaman Avenue). RING is again participating in Make Music New York, the local version of the international celebration of the summer solstice. Part of the Uptown Art Stroll, the event features musical performances by local artists, coordinated by Arthur Sherry. For more information, contact Arthur at asherry@aol.com.

22 The Scandinavian Music Festival with the Scandia Symphony, 2:00–4:00 PM, Billings Lawn, Fort Tryon Park.

26 Highbridge "Summer Sprint" Evening Cross-Country Race, 7:00 PM, Highbridge Mountain Bike Trail. Meet at the trailhead on Fort George Avenue between Amsterdam and St. Nicholas Avenues.

28 A Good Neighborhood Reading, 4:00 PM, RING Garden (at the confluence of Dyckman Street, Broadway, Riverside Drive, and Seaman Avenue). RING will host the first reading of A Good Neighborhood, a new theater project about Inwood. The reading will be one of the final events of the Uptown Art Stroll. For more information, please contact Lonnie Cooper at 917-797-9800

29 Fort Tryon Park Trust Friends Committee Beautification Day, 10:00 AM–2:00 PM, Meet at the entrance to the Ann Loftus playground entrance at Broadway and Riverside Drive. For more information, contact mkleinnyc@rcn.com.

29 The Scandinavian Music Festival with the Scandia Symphony, 2:00–4:00 PM, Billings Lawn, Fort Tryon Park. ■

Beautification Report

Mike Klein

Sunday, March 30th, was a fantastic day to start off our 2008 beautification activities, not too cool and not too hot. We had 12 very energetic volunteers. In the past, we've had volunteers join us from as far as Florida and California, but yesterday was the first time we had someone from Canada.

We managed to do a fairly thorough job removing vines and other evasive plants and dead trees and branches. We also removed rubbish from the upper and lower terrace slopes and from the cul-de-sac adjacent to the subway head house. We cleared away mud along the cast-iron fence along Fort Washington Avenue, and we started to clean out the stone culvert drainage system on the slope of the lower subway terrace. As usual, refreshments were provided at the end of the day.

For It's My Park Day on Saturday, May 17th, we plan to scrape, prime, and paint the cast-iron fence along Fort Washington Avenue and repaint the Ping-Pong tables, the benches, and the base of the flag pole on the subway terrace. And Sunday, June 29th, will be Broadway Cleanup Day; we'll meet at the entrance to the Ann Loftus playground entrance at Broadway and Riverside Drive. Contact me at mkleinnyc@rcn.com for more information.

Also, I'm happy to report that I've been receiving many phone calls and e-mail from people saying how lovely the subway terrace looks and how much they appreciate the volunteers' hard work and dedication. They also say that they are enjoying the scent of the flowers and that the terrace starts their workday off on a positive note as they go down to the subway. ■

Summer Day Camp

The Urban Park Rangers are now accepting applications for the Junior Rangers Summer Day Camp 2008. The program offers outdoor nature and recreation experiences at nature centers in Inwood Hill Park, Marine Park in Brooklyn, Crotona Park in the Bronx, and Blue Heron Park in Staten Island.

Registration is open to children ages 8 to 11. To register, please visit the Urban Park Rangers' Web site at www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers and download an application, or call 212-360-2774 to request an application.

A completed application and a \$65 check are required to reserve a space.

Woodpeckers *continued from page 1*

movement of the brain in relation to the skull and therefore little risk of injury.

The woodpecker's brain is protected, too, by transmission of much of the force of the impact to the areas of the skull that are thickest and most dense; these, in turn, transmit the force of the impact to the neck, with its thick musculature, and not to the brain. In some woodpeckers, modified joints between certain bones in the skull and upper jaw, together with the attached muscles, also absorb the force of the impact.

To peck, the woodpecker often has to stand on a rough vertical surface. To help increase its grip, the woodpecker has its toes arranged such that two are in front and two in back, in contrast to most birds' three toes facing front and one facing back. To help stabilize the bird while pecking, its legs and modified tail form the equivalent of a tripod. Its tailbones and the muscles attached to them are relatively large so that the bird can use its tail as a prop against the vertical surfaces. Even the tail feathers are very stiff, and the middle tail feathers curve slightly inward to help with this support function.

Most amazing of the adaptations is the woodpecker's tongue. If, while boring a hole, the woodpecker happens upon one of the extensive galleries formed by wood-boring beetle larvae just under the outer layer of wood, it can extend its tongue and probe to locate grubs—the red-bellied woodpecker's tongue can extend three times the length of the bill. The woodpecker's tongue is coated with sticky saliva, and the tip is pointy and barbed, perfect for spearing and retrieving the soft-bellied insects. But where, you ask, does the woodpecker store its long tongue? The tongue, which is supported by a cartilage-and-bone skeleton called the hyoid apparatus, makes a Y fork at the throat, then wraps around behind and over the skull, rejoins at the front of the head and ends, depending upon the species, either around the eye socket or in the right nostril. This entire construction may provide another mechanism to shield the woodpecker's brain from injury. (You can see photos of this amazing hyoid apparatus at <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/woodpecker/woodpecker.html> and at <http://www.hiltonpond.org/ThisWeek030308.html>, which also has superb photos of the tongue.) ■

Space limitations preclude explaining the details of these adaptations here; write to naturelover3333@yahoo.com for a reference list if you want to look up the details. Please write "Woodpecker references" in the subject line. Other communications also are welcome.



Photos © 2008 Holtz Communications, Inc.

The smallest woodpecker species and perhaps the most common, the downy woodpecker has adapted to habitats from wilderness forests to urban backyards.



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To peck, the woodpecker often has to stand on a rough vertical surface. To help increase its grip while pecking, it has two toes in front and two in back.

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 & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe: 212-360-8111
- To report an emergency: 911
- To report dangerous conditions or graffiti and other vandalism: 311
- Forestry (tree pruning, dead tree and limb removal): 311
- 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

Gazette

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