

...to continue to make Murray Hill  
a highly desirable place to live,  
work and visit.

## SWEETNESS AND LIGHTS



Lighting the first candle.  
Photo: Marion Weingarten

At 12 noon on Wednesday, November 24, volunteers from the Murray Hill Neighborhood Association and the Church of the Incarnation gathered in the church's Parish House on Madison Avenue and 35th Street to assemble 120 Thanksgiving dinners for homebound seniors in the neighborhood. This program is organized by H.O.N.E.Y. (Help

Our Neighbors Eat Year-round) which has partnered with Incarnation since 2004.

With turkey and trimmings from Sarge's Delicatessen under their arms, the volunteers delivered Thanksgiving greetings to our mature neighbors (names courtesy of Stein Senior Center) between 23rd and 42nd Streets, Madison Avenue and the East River.

A week later, the Park Avenue Malls began to take on their Hanukkah and Christmas colors with the lighting of

the first candle of the 35th Street menorah at sundown on December 1. Rabbi Joel Goor's daughter, Beri, of Metropolitan Synagogue, presided. And on Sunday afternoon, December 5, the ceremonial lighting of trees in the Malls began with blessings by the Rev. J. Douglas Ousley of the Church of the Incarnation and the Rev. George W. Rutler of the Church of Our Saviour.

The appearance of Santa in his customary place at the carol sing in front of Scandinavia House brought even more joy than usual. And later still, girded



Santa and Mrs. Santa. Photo: Sami Steigmann

*Continued on page 19*

## Hanging Out with the Roosevelts of Hyde Park

The MHNA bus trip to Roosevelt country in Hyde Park, N.Y., left from Park Avenue and 36th Street at 8 AM on Saturday, October 9. We had no clue how much we were to experience on what turned into a 12-hour day of twisting roads and presidential revelation.

The 2½-hour ride upstate went smoothly and after a visit to Eleanor Roosevelt's Stone Cottage retreat at Val-Kill we enjoyed a marvelous lunch at the Culinary Institute of America. Then it was on to full immersion at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt estate and the FDR Presidential Library and Museum on the grounds.

The Roosevelt estate includes Springwood, FDR's family home, its outbuildings, and the Rose Garden where Franklin and Eleanor (and two family dogs) are buried. Franklin



Off to Val-Kill Cottage.

Photo: Joe W. Di Domenico

Delano Roosevelt was born here on January 30, 1882, weighing 10-pounds ("without clothes"), the only child of James and Sara Delano Roosevelt. And it was to this place that he was returned after his death on April 12, 1945. A year later the estate was opened to the public as a 290-acre national historic site run by the National Park Service.

In between, the estate remained FDR's touchstone throughout his boyhood, 14 years spent fishing, bird watching and stamp collecting before he left for Groton and Harvard. It was the place where he and his bride, Eleanor, came after their wedding in New York City on March 17, 1905. It was the place where his formidable mother, Sara, lived and ran

*Continued on page 9*

# Murray Hill Life

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
MURRAY HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
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[info@murrayhillnyc.org](mailto:info@murrayhillnyc.org)  
and please use the subject line  
"Murray Hill Life".



## From the President's Desk *Diane Bartow*

Welcome to 2011 and the 51st year of the Murray Hill Neighborhood Association. We continue to face important issues in the coming year, with traffic and transportation heading the list.

This column is, first and foremost, a heartfelt thank you to the many volunteers who have given so much to this association.

It is also a call to action.

The September town hall meeting on traffic and transportation was a great success, thanks to all of you who came out to support your neighborhood. This meeting took four (four!) months to set up. It involved attending more than 10 meetings with the DOT, plus meetings with all the elected officials, the MTA, Community Boards 4, 5 and 6, and two meetings with the CAC (Community Action Committee on the 34th Street Transitway), as well as our own transportation committee meetings.

We set up web sites, collected petitions and wrote countless letters, and tried to keep you updated on the situation. This work was done exclusively by volunteers who gave completely to this cause. So to all, thank you so much for caring about your neighborhood; you really are making a difference. Our voice is being heard!

Please check out the Murray Hill website [www.murrayhillnyc.org](http://www.murrayhillnyc.org) to get the most updated information about where we stand with these traffic and transportation issues.

This incredible association really showed its strength in the last half of 2010. We can't stop now; we need to continue to push hard in 2011. If you reside on 34th Street, please join our 34th Street action committee, which continues to fight hard to restore access and make sure that DOT plans are acceptable to the community and its residents.

The rest of our neighborhood must get involved in the work of the traffic and transportation committee. In addition to the proposed Transitway, the committee is fighting hard to restore the M1 bus service (which is being reviewed by the MTA). We also monitor traffic on our streets and its effect on the quality of life, including the bus changes already in place on First and Second Avenues.

MHNA is a fully volunteer association, and I cannot overstate the importance of your involvement. We need your help. In addition to transportation and traffic, we are involved in the greening and clean up of Murray Hill; the many events we organize for your enjoyment; the preservation and expansion of the Murray Hill neighborhood historic district, to name only a few.

To all the volunteers who give so much to this wonderful neighborhood, thank you. I wish I had the space to thank you individually. This association is all about you!

Now, we need *the rest of you* to continue to make Murray Hill a highly desirable place to live and work. The time is now: our neighborhood is at risk. This association is all about us: all of us!

## News from MECA *Fred Arcaro, President*

### *Manhattan East Community Association*

"Select Bus Service" (SBS), the joint MTA-DOT project on First and Second Avenues, started operation on October 10. There needs to be more education for riders on the use of the prepay system, and pedestrians' safety along designated Bike Lanes needs to be improved. The Public Safety, Environment and Transportation (PSE&T) Committee of Community Board 6 will work with DOT to improve public safety. The SBS project is scheduled to be totally completed by early 2012.

### **An Alternative to 34th Street Bus Plan?**

As reported previously, MTA and DOT made a presentation to the PSE&T Committee of CB 6 on proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)—or Transitway—service along 34th Street. CB 6 unanimously expressed its concerns months ago, but DOT has yet to respond in a credible way.

DOT has refused to consider one of their own alternatives that could address most community concerns. Called Transportation System Management (TSM), this DOT alternative is similar to Select Bus Service. The bus lanes and stops along 34th Street would not change, however bus stops would have the prepay stations system; general traffic lanes would not change, and there would not be a pedestrian plaza between Fifth and Sixth Avenues.

In my opinion, the BRT plan is not workable for our community. The TSM alternative is the best solution, which meets most of MTA/DOT goals while still answering many of the community's objections.

### **Sweeping Changes for NYU Langone Medical Center**

NYU Langone Medical Center and New York University approved a plan that will turn the north end of the Medical Center campus into a fully integrated clinical facility dedicated to acute care. Bounded by First Avenue, 34th Street, and the FDR Drive, the site will be anchored by the new Helen L. and Martin S. Kimmel Pavilion at the north end and Tisch Hospital, the Medical Center's flagship clinical facility, at the south end.

Extensive renovations are already underway at Tisch Hospital to accommodate a new Critical Care Unit on the 15th floor, private rooms, expanded lobby, family resource center, clinical pharmacy and labs.

The Kimmel Pavilion will be connected to Tisch on several floors, and the Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine will be demolished. Rusk patients are to be relocated to NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases at 17th Street and Second Avenue. Construction is to begin in 2013, with completion at the end of 2017.

### **Imminent Start for School Construction on First Avenue**

The City School Construction Authority is proceeding with its plan to build the future PS/IS 281 on the southwest quarter of 616 First Avenue, site of the former Con Edison power plant. Construction should start in January/February 2011, with completion by 2014.

If you have not renewed your MECA membership, please do so. Please send your dues (payable to MECA) to 415 East 37th Street, NY 10016, or to MHNA (payable to Murray Hill Neighborhood Association) to PO Box 1897, NY 10156-1897. Thank you for your continuing support of MECA.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Murray Hill Life:

I'd like to share with you the letter I wrote and sent separately to each elected official listed on p. 6 of the Autumn newsletter.

Thanks for the beautiful and informative publication!

*R.H.*

Dear Councilwoman Mendez,

Mornings are serene on my 15th floor balcony at 35th and Lexington, where I drink coffee and enjoy the view of lush rooftop gardens on every corner. Honking horns and street drilling by Con Ed sometimes intrude, but these disturbances will certainly be magnified hundredfold if the 34th Street Transitway becomes a reality. Traffic diverted from 34th Street will predictably clog our residential street and increase the amount of dirt, air pollution and noise we will experience daily.

Other cross streets in Murray Hill are certain to meet the same fate, driving out residents and changing the character of our neighborhood. Speaking as one 10-year resident, I urge you to help prevent this plan from taking effect. Murray Hill has worked hard to create and maintain its reputation as a pleasant and neighborly place to live in the city—a historic, residential oasis in Midtown.

Please, please help us keep it that way!

*Most sincerely yours,  
Roberta Hershenson  
132 East 35th Street*

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## Members' Corner

### New Members

James Adelman	Roberta Licht
Linda & Barry Berman	Vered Mallon
Claudia Bishopp	Jonathan Klarman
Martha Stine	Patricia Nix
Ken Szefler	John & Anne Olive
Suzanne Dacey-Clavin	Douglas Riva & Karen Riley
Suneeta & Vinay Dewan	Mary L. Simpson
Sybil Evans & Richard Shevlin	Anna Waller
Sherry & Ron Frier	Gail C. Warner
Thomas Grischkowsky & Giovanni Trujillo	James J. White
Ellen Yost Lafili	Herbert & Marcia Winkler
	L. Gerard Ceccarelli DC

If your membership has lapsed and you are unable to locate your renewal form, please use the form provided below. We'll know it's for a renewal. Otherwise, use the form to introduce a friend to MHNA!

### Tell a Friend about the Murray Hill Neighborhood Association

Please enter a new or renewal membership at the level I have indicated below. My check is enclosed, payable to **Murray Hill Neighborhood Association.**

- \$35 Individual   
  \$50 Couple   
  \$60 Business/Professional  
 \$20 Senior Citizen (age 65+)   
  \$40 Senior Couple (age 65+)  
 \$100 Patron   
  \$250 Guardian   
  \$500 Benefactor

I want to make **an additional contribution** to help you further your work: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional contributions will be acknowledged in our Newsletter. If you prefer not to be acknowledged, please check here

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Second Name (couples) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Referring Member, if applicable \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Murray Hill Neighborhood Association  
 PO Box 1897, New York, NY 10156-1897

Lists as of 11/30/2010

### New Business Members

Jeffrey A. Asher, **Eaton & Van Winkle LLP**: see ad on p. 10  
 Neil Machlovitz, **J. Lucas Custom Clothiers**: see ad on p. 5;  
 Also participates in the Discount Program; see listing below.  
**St. Giles Hotel, LLC**

### New, Changed and Discontinued Discount Merchant Terms

#### New Participants

**Estiatorio Rafina**, 630 First Ave./36 St., 212-532-2234; 10% discount

**J. Lucas Custom Clothiers**, 218 Madison Ave., Ste. 2F/36 St., 212-684-2752; 15% discount for one year; excludes tax, gratuities and delivery

**Nanoosh, Mediterranean Hummus Counter**, 173 Madison Ave., 33/34 Sts., 212-447-4345; 10% discount after 3 PM Monday-Friday, Saturday 11 AM to 6 PM

**New York Life Insurance Co.**, Jonathan Klarman, 420 Lexington Ave., Fl. 15, 43/44 Sts., 631-926-2157; Free financial evaluation and always free life insurance quotes from the #1 company. Call or e-mail J. Klarman at jaklarman@ft.newyorklife.com

**O'Casey's Restaurant**, 22 E. 41 St., Fifth/Madison, 212-685-6807; 15% discount excluding tax & gratuities, delivery and take-out; does not include Brunch Special

**Trattoria Belvedere**, 165 Lexington Ave., 212-684-8805; 10% discount; Excludes taxes and gratuities; delivery/take-out not included; Cash only

**Zengo, Latin-Asian Cuisine**, 622 Third Ave., 40th St. 212-808-8110; 20% off at Sunday dinner. Mention this discount when making your reservation

#### Change in Discount Terms


**Bravest on 38th Restaurant & Bar**, 15% discount on brunch with cash only; tips not included

**Rossini's Restaurant**, 10% discount; excludes tax and gratuities; delivery and take-out not included

**Bruce Woolf, LMT, Shiatsu and Thai Yoga Massage**, 10% discount at 43rd St. office; 20% discount Mobile Works (off-site visit to your home or office)

#### No Longer Participating

AED Optical Express	Peking Park East Restaurant
Aphrodite Cleaners	Trio
Cellulite Center	Zereoué Restaurant & Bar



**Save the Date**  
**Sunday, February 13, 2011**  
 We're celebrating Valentine's Day a day early this year.  
 Join old friends and make new ones.  
 Look for future mailing with the time and place.

## Transit Town Hall Meeting Strikes a Nerve in Murray Hill

On September 23, 2010, more than 250 people filled the Armenian Evangelical Church on 34th Street for a special Transit Town Hall organized by the Murray Hill Neighborhood Association. Present in the standing-room crowd were four of New York's elected officials (and staff members representing three more), plus MHNA trustees, and media representatives. The SRO crowd also included plenty of disgruntled neighbors not shy about voicing their opposition to the Department of Transportation about its 34th Street Transitway plan.

In advance of the meeting, MHNA had received more than 50 questions in response to a questionnaire. Also, the association gave the DOT a petition signed by 2,000 residents calling for the DOT to shelve the plan. Remember, the Transitway would restrict two-way traffic on 34th Street to buses only between the FDR Drive and 12th Avenue. For Murray Hill, all other vehicular traffic would be one way: eastbound only between Fifth Avenue and First Avenue.

Of most concern to residents was the effect this traffic restriction would have on safety and quality-of-life issues. Specifically on 34th Street, questions focused on what would happen in terms of emergency vehicles, Access-A-Ride, deliveries, building repairs, trash collection, pollution, and protection of trees. And, of course, there were money questions. The Transitway had a price tag of \$36 million. The city had already been awarded \$18 million in federal funds. If the Transitway didn't happen, would the city be allowed to keep the money for other projects? Short answer: No.

The elected representatives at the meeting—City Council members Dan Garodnick and Rosie Mendez; Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer; Assemblyman Richard Gottfried—heard the discontent of their constituents. Representatives of Carolyn Maloney, Christine Quinn, Bill de Blasio, and Congressman Jerry Nadler (the west side of 34th Street) were also in attendance. While they praised the DOT for innovative ideas to reduce congestion and address safety concerns along “the 34th Street corridor,” they all called for more research, analysis and community meetings.

“It enrages me when anyone thinks your idea is the only one in the room,” Stringer said. “You must reach down and amend and discuss; reach out block by block, building by building. We must get this issue right.”

In response, the DOT insisted that the current plan was not a *fait accompli* and promised to take Murray Hill's objections to heart. “We don't have a design that we're ready to put on the street tomorrow,” said Eric Beaton, senior project manager on the Transitway. “If we can't answer these questions, then, frankly, this project isn't a good project.”

And on October 29, 2010, Kate Mikuliak, the Bus Rapid Transit outreach coordinator, issued a lengthy reply to 52 questions from the neighborhood. With repeated references to “community forums,” “input from the public” and “feed-

back from the Community Action Committee,” the 5,100-word document presented the DOT's process, timeline and case for the Transitway. (To see this report, go to the MHNA website at [murrayhillnyc.org](http://murrayhillnyc.org).)

### Transitway Update

by Marisa Bulzone

We will not back down! MHNA continues to press our community concerns about the 34th Street Transitway with the DOT and all of our elected officials.

Following our well attended Town Hall meeting, members of MHNA's 34th Street Action Committee met with Assemblyman Richard Gottfried as well as representatives of Public Advocate Bill de Blasio. We continue to press for personal meetings with State Senator Liz Krueger as well as Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Charles E. Schumer.

Based on our interaction at DOT Open House forums held in October and November, we continue to be unimpressed with the department's response to the community and businesses on and surrounding 34th Street.

The Transportation Committee of Community Board 5 has put together a very thorough list of business and community concerns that they are presenting as part of their resolution to DOT. Their presentation is posted at [www.cb5taskforce34.wordpress.com](http://www.cb5taskforce34.wordpress.com) and members of the public are invited to comment and raise additional concerns there

Continued on page 19



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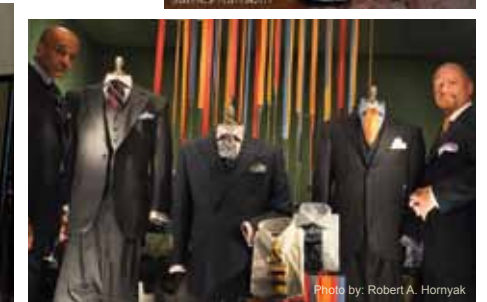
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**The Morgan Library & Museum**

*Madison Avenue between 36th and 37th Streets*

**Visit the newly renovated 1906 McKim, Mead and White landmark building** This architectural gem, located mid-block on 36th Street between Madison and Park Avenues, reopened on October 29. Months of work to refurbish the oldest building in the museum's complex included new lighting systems, a thorough cleaning from floor to ceiling, reupholstering, and reinstalling light fixtures stored away for decades.

Now open to public view is the original office of the first director, Bella da Costa Greene, transformed into a gallery exhibiting some of the oldest works in the Morgan's collection. Also, the curtain covering the vault in Morgan's office has been removed to reveal a small room with original storage boxes, books and small art objects. Under updated lighting in the Rotunda are display cases of Morgan's collection of Americana, printed material it couldn't show safely before. Look for the first Bible printed in America.

**Degas at the Morgan: Drawings and Sketchbooks, through January 23** More than 20 drawings by Edgar Degas (1834-1917) include early drawings of contemporary life and portraits of himself, family and friends and later studies of dancers. Degas used graphite, watercolor, black chalk and pastel, plus innovative combinations of these media.

**The Kasper Collection: Mannerism and Modernism, January 21 to May 1** Drawings and photographs of the collection of Herbert Kasper, a leading 20th-century American fashion designer, include 16th- and 17th-century works by Mannerist artists of the Late Renaissance: Fra Bartolomeo, Caravaggio, Goltzius and Vasari; as well as contemporary drawings by Picasso, Gris, Matisse and Dubuffet.

**The Diary, January 21 to May 22** This exhibit, drawn primarily from Morgan's own holdings, includes diaries from Anais Nin to Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

**The Changing Face of William Shakespeare, February 4 to May 1** In 2009 the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust unveiled a previously unknown portrait with strong claims to be the only surviving lifetime portrait of Shakespeare. Both this



Hilaire Germain Edgar Degas (1834-1917), *Emilie Becat at the Café des Ambassadeurs, 1877-85, pastel over lithograph.* Thaw Collection, 1997.88.

portrait and a recently identified portrait of Shakespeare's patron, Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, were inherited by Archbishop Charles Cobbe (1686-1765). This exhibition is the first time the Cobbe portraits of Shakespeare and Southampton have been shown outside of the British Isles.

**For information about public programs: lectures, concerts, gallery talks and special events, call 212-685-0008 or visit the Morgan's website at www.themorgan.org. Enjoy Friday evenings until 9 PM. FREE from 7 PM to 9 PM.**

**CUNY Graduate Center**

*Fifth Avenue between 34th and 35th Streets*

CUNY will continue its offerings of Public Programs for the Public Mind, a diverse schedule of concerts, lectures, readings, discussions and exhibitions in the James Gallery. Following are some examples, now with small fees to cover costs. Order tickets at 212-868-4444 or at www.smarttix.com. See membership information below for discounts.

**Music in Midtown, lunchtime concerts, Thursdays at 1 PM, Elebash Hall.** \$8; members \$6. Check the website or phone number below for the updated 2011 schedule.

**Gotham Center History Forums, 6:30 PM (unless otherwise indicated), \$8; members \$6**  
**Wednesday, February 23, Black Gotham: African American elites in 19th-century New York City**

**Wednesday, March 9, More New York Stories as told by writers in The New York Times City Section**  
**Thursday, March 24, Triangle Shirtwaist Fire Commemoration. Note: Auditorium, 7-9 PM**

**Tuesday, March 29, Housing with Peter Eisenstadt, Fritz Umbach and Nick Bloom**  
**Thursday, April 14, On the Bowery, screening of this classic 1957 quasi-documentary film**

**Initiative for the Theoretical Sciences: Public Lectures, 6:30 PM, FREE**  
**Thursday, February 24, Visions of Vision: Artists, Mathematics and the Brain, featuring Steven Zucker, Professor of Computer Science and Biomedical Engineering at Yale University**  
**Tuesday, March 29, The Science of Sweets: From Mousse and Marshmallows to Soft Matter Physics, presented by Amy Rowat, a physicist who will soon move from Harvard to UCLA.**  
**Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson: Collaboration in Musical Theatre, Friday, February 4, 5 PM, Martin E. Segal Theatre Center. FREE** Distinguished Professor David Savran, CUNY Graduate Center, hosts an evening of panel discussion and performance.

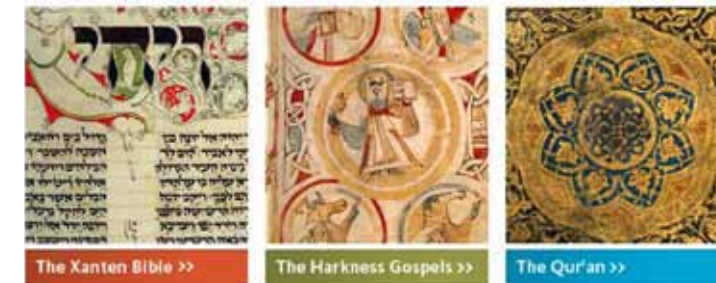
**The complete schedule of CUNY Graduate Center events resumes in January. For updated information, check the website at www.gc.cuny.edu/events or call 212-817-8215. Various levels of membership, starting at \$25, are available.**

**The New York Public Library**

*Fifth Avenue at 42nd Street (The Stephen A. Schwarzman Building)*

**Three Faiths: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, through February 27, Gottesman Exhibition Hall Scriptorium, Wachenheim III Gallery (both on Main Floor) Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, 10 AM-6 PM; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10 AM-8 PM, Sundays, 1-5 PM (except Monday, January 17 and Monday, February 21) FREE** Portraying major aspects of the Abrahamic faiths, illustrating their basic commonalities, Monotheism, Abraham, Revelation and Scriptures, this exhibit showcases materials from the 5th century to the present. Inspired by the British Library's 2007 exhibit, "Sacred: Discover What We Share," the show explores how the history, culture, art and theology of these three religions have influenced one another through the ages.

**The Scriptorium** is an interactive gallery illustrating the scribal traditions of the three faiths, including their resources: animal hides, minerals, gems and plants from which parchment, pigments and inks were derived, and the



tools to create such works. Videos show the process and rigorous training of the craftspeople and artists who did this amazing work. Visitors can try to create script samples.

**A special hands-on workshop: January 31 through February 4:** Conducted by artists from the London-based Prince's School of Traditional Arts

**Faith on the Streets:** In conjunction with the Three Faiths exhibit, New Yorkers are invited to take photos of contemporary expressions of any faith, which will be published in a Flickr Gallery featured in the website www.exhibitions.nypl.org/threefaiths. Photos can be submitted by e-mail to threefaiths@nypl.org. Entries might be a family Bible, Buddhist prayers, religious jewelry and objects.

**An extensive schedule of complementary events is scheduled for adults, teens and children at the 42nd Street Library and**

**branches. Check www.exhibitions.nypl.org/threefaiths. Centennial celebration of the 42nd Street/Schwarzman building: Upcoming exhibit starting in May.**

Also, there are ongoing lectures on a variety of topics, many FREE. If you haven't taken the free tour of the library's history and architecture, it's time to do so!  
**For information about exhibits, lectures, tours, call 212-869-8089 or visit the web at www.nypl.org**

**NOTE: Also check SIBL (5th Avenue at 34th Street) and Mid-Manhattan (5th Avenue at 40th Street) for their ongoing schedule of free lectures and computer classes.**

**Scandinavia House**

*Park Avenue between 37th and 38th Streets*

**Milestone Events: 10th Anniversary of Scandinavia House;** 100th Anniversary of the American Scandinavian Foundation. In honor of the occasion, the ASF will present several exhibitions and supplement its programming with special presentations.

**Nordic Models and Common Ground, through March 9 (the first in a series of exhibitions), Tuesdays-Saturdays, 12-6 PM FREE.** New Nordic art and design from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden features architecture, product and graphic design, fine art, fashion and photogra-

*Continued on page 8*

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lunch      brunch      dinner

phy by 35 emerging and established artists. The focus is on shared practices and ideas and their global impact. Mainly in the third floor gallery, the display continues along the stairs going down to the auditorium level and on that floor. And don't miss the elevator!

**Film Series: New Nordic Cinema, Wednesdays, 6:30 PM; Saturdays, 3 PM;** \$10, \$7 (ASF members)

**Concerts:** For reservations call 212-847-9740 or email [event\\_reservations@amscan.org](mailto:event_reservations@amscan.org). Check schedule for jazz, modern and classical performances

**Keyboard Conversations with Pianist Jeffrey Siegel: Concerts with Commentary, Thursdays, 8 PM;** Single tickets: \$15, \$10 (members), or dinner-concert combination.

**January 27,** Romantic Fantasies, music of Schumann, Brahms and Stenhammar

**April 21,** The Miracle of Mozart, well-known works and musical discoveries

**Contemporary Scandinavian Reading Series: Scandinavian American Theater Company, Monday, January 31: Reception 7:30 PM, Reading 8 PM.** Pinocchio's Ashes, an expressionist drama by Jokum Rohde (Denmark 2005), directed by Henning Hegland (Norway)

**For Lectures, Book Shops, and Family and Children's Programs, check 2011 schedule.**

**Smörgås Restaurant** is open for brunch, lunch, dinner, snacks, coffee/tea and combination deals with certain films and other events (212-847-9747).

**For information about specific activities and events, visit Scandinavia House's website at [www.scandinaviahouse.org](http://www.scandinaviahouse.org). To receive ongoing information, submit your e-mail address by clicking on the right: "Join the Scandinavia House e-list and receive weekly program updates." Or call 212-879-9779. Or become a member and get discounts.**

## Bryant Park

GOOD NEWS! **The Pond's** sixth season of free ice skating will continue through February 27. In March the lawn will open mid to late April or early May, with spring and summer events, including music, the Reading Room, yoga and other exercise programs and Monday night movies.

**Visit the web at [www.bryantpark.org](http://www.bryantpark.org) and sign up on "My Bryant Park" to receive ongoing information; or call 212-768-4242.**

## Victorian Society in America

### 2011 Spring Lecture Series

Presented by the New York Metropolitan Chapter of VSA at The New York New Church, 114 East 35th Street in Murray Hill.

**Lectures are free and open to the public.** No reservations required. Tuesdays at 6 PM: February 8, March 8, April 12, and May 10. Notable writers and scholars will speak on topics dealing with the art, architecture, culture and history of mid 19th- to early 20th-century New York. Members of the Victorian Society are invited to a meet-the-speaker reception following each lecture. For further information, visit our website at [www.metrovsa.org](http://www.metrovsa.org).

## Youth Stamp Club in Its Second Year

The Youth Stamp Club of the Collectors Club of New York is a free program open to students in Grade 4 and up. The Club meets once a month, Saturday mornings, from 10-11:30 AM at the Collectors Club, 22 East 35th Street. The upcoming dates are: January 22, February 19, March 19, April 16 and May 21. New members are welcome.

Beginners are introduced to this fascinating and educational hobby. Youth who are already collectors will find encouragement and guidance. Through stamps, this program explores topics as diverse as explorers, space, sports, history and the United Nations. Stamps and other materials will be provided.

For information or to register, e-mail to [collectorsclub@verizon.net](mailto:collectorsclub@verizon.net) or call 212-683-0559.

the estate's business affairs, in a room called "the Snuggery," until her death in 1941.

It was the place that FDR made his unofficial headquarters during two terms as New York State's Governor (1929-32) and



The tour, in front of Springwood, FDR's family home.

Photo: Joe W. Di Domenico

the place where he met with world leaders and found respite during 12 years as President of the United States (1933-45). It was here that he delivered four of his "fireside chats." And it is here that the busts of FDR and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill stand side by side, just as the two leaders of the English-speaking world stood steadfast in wartime as the world hung in the balance.

It is also a bucolic place where FDR was a tree farmer for 34 years. He planted more than half a million trees, and eventually turned large parts of the estate into an experimental forestry station. His favorite tree was the tulip magnolia, but it is a huge cucumber magnolia which merits a special plaque indicating that it was the tallest (the oldest? the prettiest?) tree on the estate.



Franklin Roosevelt himself knew that he lived in a transformative time, and he drew up the plans for the Library and Museum himself and raised the funds to build it. In addition to 17 million pages of documents and 44,000 books, the place houses manuscripts, photographs, recordings and film. Two wings originally designed by FDR were added in 1972 to include enlarged research facilities and a gallery devoted to Eleanor Roosevelt.

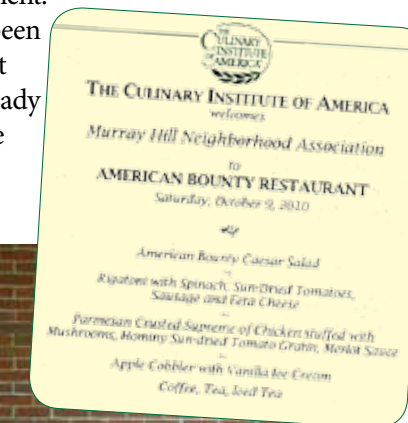


Two of the most intriguing exhibits were off the beaten track: one featured Fala (1940-1952), Eleanor and Franklin's Scottish terrier, dubbed "the Informer"

by the Secret Service men assigned to walk him; the second the President's shining

automobile—a 1936 Ford Phaeton, with special hand controls—on display in the basement.

The Phaeton might have been able to get us home faster. But with Marion Weingarten's steady encouragement as copilot, we finally found ourselves back where we began.



At the CIA. Left to right: Marion Weingarten, Susan Salmansohn, Ray Townsend, Marlene Doran.

Photo courtesy of Ray Townsend

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## A Gala Evening to Close Out Our Anniversary Year

On Sunday evening, December 5, a glittering gathering raised a last huzzah in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Murray Hill Neighborhood Association at Trattoria Alba. A three-hour, top-shelf open bar—we think we even saw a Grey Goose or two flying around the premises—plus a hot anti-pasto buffet at cocktail hour warmed up the merrymakers.

Then a three-course, sit-down dinner spanned everything from soup (well, Penne Pomodoro e Basilico) to nuts (well, Tiramisù or Ricotta Cheese Cake), with such entrees as Pollo Cacciatore, Pasta Primavera and Vitello alla Francese in between. Thus fortified, 45 of the best-dressed neighbors you will ever see took to the dance floor.

With music provided for by Fred Arcaro and MECA (thank you, Fred!), the D.J., Ryan Ho, selected and presented the tunes. The tuxedos led and the sparkling gowns followed, and, if we're not mistaken, some feet never touched the ground as they danced the night away. Seen amidst the wining-dining-and-dancing crowd were Diane and Gene Bartow; John Chadwick, Irma Fisher and Shirley Mac Leod; Matthew Mc Keon and Robin Fifield; Ed Curtin and his wife, Jill; Ellen Imbimbo, Fred Arcaro, Ed and Thayer Hochberg, Terri Hahn, Ann Churchill, Steve and Romi Weingrad, Dick Simpson and, of course, Paula Gilliam, the creative force who made it all happen. For Paula, it was a labor of love and a reprise of the role she performed with such distinction and joie de vivre in the years after she first moved to Murray Hill in 1976. The final toast belongs to her. 🍷



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Dick Golub at a "Chopin Evening" at the Polish Consulate in 1998.

## In Memory of a True Gentleman

by Ellen Propp

Longtime trustee and Murray Hill resident Dick Golub passed away on November 27 after a gradual decline from Parkinson's disease. He was 86. In the years I knew him, he was a lively and charming man with a great love for life. Raised on the Upper West Side, Dick was a graduate of DeWitt Clinton High School and attended the University of Virginia. He joined the navy during World War II and landed on Iwo

Jima on his 21st birthday. He also saw action on Okinawa.

Dick came to Murray Hill as a young man, but he and his wife, Rena, moved to Westchester to raise their two boys. Their love of New York City, and particularly Murray Hill, was such that the Golubs returned to the very same building when moving back to Manhattan became an option.

Dick was particularly proud of his sons. Peter, who composes concert pieces and music for theater, documentaries and movies, is the composer and director of the film music program at the Sundance Music Institute. Jimmy moved in another direction: farming and animal husbandry, particularly artificial insemination of cows. He also runs a children's educational agricultural program in upstate New York. Dick's four grandchildren, ages 27 to 5—including Ginger, who at age 23 just returned to the U.S. after spending

over a year on a Fulbright Scholarship in Kenya evaluating AIDS prevention methods—were his delight.

Dick was in the men's shirt business at Publix Shirt Company where he was VP in charge of sales. In addition to Rena, his wife of 60 years, and his sons and grandchildren, he loved the arts, particularly all music with an emphasis on jazz (he played piano by ear) and photography, which he collected. Until a few years ago his photographs illustrated our MHNA architectural awards presentations, highlighting the treasures in the neighborhood. Another of his interests was the New York Public Library, where he volunteered in its photography department. Also, he headed up that institution's lobbying efforts in Albany.

Dick and Rena were consummate New Yorkers—partaking in the varied opportunities Manhattan offers—many of us would run into them at numerous cultural venues. We all in Murray Hill will miss him and send condolences to his wonderful family.

### In the Words of His Friends

I met Dick and Rena in the early 1990s when I first joined the Murray Hill Preservation & Design Committee. Dick and Rena came together, a matched set: if you knew one, you knew the other. Rena was always at the P&D events to cheer us on. The best thing I can say is that I wish I had been able to adopt them as my surrogate parents after my own parents died.

Virginia Parkhouse

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

The service was warm and elegant—just like Dick himself. When his grandson sat at the piano to play a favorite piece, I just know that Dick was somewhere grinning that big grin of his. I loved to speak with Dick about his and Rena's photography collection; their taste was exquisite, but most importantly they collected with great joy. I'm so sad to have lost a good friend and fellow Mets fan.

Marisa Bulzone

Dick was always there... working with Minor Bishop to get ready for the P & D Awards. Slide by slide, year after year, they worked out the details of the presentations. The 2011 P&D Awards will be a tribute to Dick Golub's memory. He will be missed.

Anita Duncan

Dick was part of the team on the awards program: picking the slides, running down the owners... just wonderful. He was marvelous, a great worker for the historic district. He even filmed a little video of my Murray Hill walking tour – he did some editing: he cut out the racy parts.

Minor Bishop

Dick was a gentle, generous, loving gentleman... for the community and mankind.

Irma Worrell Fisher

Dick was an unusually kind and giving person, not only as a devoted MHNA Trustee and P&D member, but as a friend to all who felt they could confide whatever was on their minds. His judgment always seemed right and he always had time to listen to the myriad details that go into the workings of a neighborhood group.

Enid Klass

I had the honor of working with Dick when he was cataloging his photography collection. I learned much about photography and much about gentility from Dick. It's been one of my life's highlights.

Joe Di Domenico



On September 12, 2010, MHNA Trustee Marion Weingarten rests before heading up to Central Park to participate in the 20th-anniversary running of the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. The Komen 5K races began in 1991 in New York, with 2,500 women participating to raise breast cancer awareness. In September, Marion was one of 21,000 women, men and children to wend their way through the park's leafy course. Serendipity and a friendly race volunteer awarded Marion a bib number with Murray Hill's Zip code.

Photo: John Carroll



## PROUDLY CELEBRATING OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY!

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## Mary Silver Is "Woman of Distinction"

Each year, the New York State Senate honors a select group of outstanding women in the state "who make our lives better." At the 13th annual Women of Distinction celebration on May 26, 2010, in Albany, Senator Liz Krueger recognized Mary Silver, a tireless advocate for New York City schools, as one of the honorees.

"Mary Silver has been a tremendous asset to New York City schools," said Senator Krueger. "As a parent to children in New York's public school system and as an advocate for quality education for all children, she understands what needs to be done to enhance our school system."

Currently, Ms. Silver is First Vice President of Community Education Council District 2, where she has served for the past five years. She is also a member of the executive committee of Friends of New York City Lab School and an ever-present advocate for P.S. 116, which her children have attended over the last 11 years and where she served as PTA president. 



We again extend our condolences to Muriel Rosenberg, a long-time member and former Trustee of MHNA, whose son Shelly passed away in November. Besides his mother Muriel, whose husband Bernie passed away only last year, Shelly leaves a wife and daughter and two sisters. Our prayers go out to them all.

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## The Reel Murray Hill

by William J. McClure

Moving to Murray Hill in 1971 was not only a good choice of location for me to live but also a sensible one for the constant moviegoer in me. The neighborhood had two movie houses! This was prior to the city-wide influx of the movie multiplex, with its multiple screens and lack of individuality. The Murray Hill, a single-screen theater at 160 East 34th Street, was around the corner and I could see the back of the building's peaked roof from my apartment window. The other single-screen theater was the 34th Street East (241 East 34th), two blocks away. In their heydays both theaters were well-known and well-liked by the city's cinema crowd.



The Murray Hill in 1970.

Photo: (c) Joseph Testagrose. [www.busdrawings.com](http://www.busdrawings.com)

Walter Reade, Sr. was the man behind a chain of theaters which grew from a single theater in Asbury Park, N.J., to a chain of forty theaters and drive-ins in New Jersey, New York and neighboring states. When his father died in 1952, Walter Reade, Jr. assumed control of the company until his death in 1973. He opened the 34th Street Theatre in July 1963 with the American premiere of *This Sporting Life*. One of the film's stars, Rachel Roberts, and her then-husband Rex Harrison, attended the first-night invitational gala. The 34th Street location also housed the headquarters of the Walter Reade-Sterling Organization.

Due to the failure of one of its staples, "art house" foreign films, the company posted a major financial loss in 1964 and began to distribute more commercial releases. Reade made a last stand by releasing *Night of the Living Dead* in 1968. But by 1977 the company had filed for bankruptcy; in 1985 Columbia Pictures bought it and then sold it to the Cineplex Odeon Corporation in 1987.

The theater maintained a reputation for showing mostly upscale movies but closed its doors in September 1997 with *Kull the Conqueror*, a barbarian action thriller. Currently, the space serves as home to Yeshiva University's Geraldine Schottenstein Cultural Center.

The 34th Street East was an arriviste compared to the theatrical bloodlines of what would become the Murray Hill Theatre. The history of that space surprisingly goes back to

1893 when it was originally named the 34th Street Lyceum and Opera House. During World War I, it was converted into a movie house. When Edward Rugoff bought the space, he remodeled the movie house and renamed it the Murray Hill Theatre for its opening in October 1959. In 1968 it became part of Cinema 5, the name of the film distribution company the Rugoff family started in 1963.



The 34th Street East in 1973.

We were fortunate to have a local movie house to show a variety of first-run domestic and foreign films. Among the filmmakers Rugoff introduced to Murray Hill were


Costa-Gavras, with *Z*; Werner Herzog, with *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*; and Nicolas Roeg, with *The Man Who Fell to Earth*. Because the theater was moderately sized (600 seats), it was often sold out during popular film runs. I remember standing in line to see *The Sting* and *Superman*.

A unique feature at the Murray Hill was the snack bar. The usual colas, candy bars and popcorn were sold, but the Rugoffs also brought in goods from a local bakery. I am told that brownies, chocolate chip and oatmeal cookies were available.

Then something happened off-screen at the Murray Hill that started the demise of the popular neighborhood theater. In 1986 during the run of *Psycho III*, the ceiling over the balcony collapsed during the last showing of the night. The few customers in the balcony scrambled to safety, but one man was seriously hurt. A couple of days later the remaining ceiling fell during the night.

The theater remained closed for two years. A new ceiling was put up but there was seating only in the orchestra when the theater re-opened with the showing of *Bull Durham* in 1988. Later, the balcony seats were restored for *Batman* (1989). Then, the Murray Hill closed again for a complete re-birth as a four-screen theater. The Murray Hill quad opened December 21, 1990 with *The Bonfire of the Vanities* on two screens along with *The Sheltering Sky* and *The Field* on the two other screens.

But the onslaught of multiplexes had begun. The Loews Kips Bay on Second Avenue opened in 1999 with 14 screens. The Murray Hill (along with the popular Brew's Restaurant next door) was closed in 2002 and demolished to make way for New York University's Cancer Center.

I miss these single-screen movie houses. Rugoff and Reade (and their successors) were innovative film pioneers and brought celebrities to Murray Hill. The multiplexes have little personality, multi-national business ownership, deafening sound systems and arctic air conditioning. So I stay home and watch DVDs on my wide-screen HDTV with a theater sound system. I can adjust the sound and don't get the chills. But one thing I cannot duplicate at home is the wonderful aroma and sound of hot buttered corn popping in the lobby concession stands. 

## New Trustees Elected to MHNABoard

**Susan Demmet** got her start with non-profits as a member of the board of her building, 211 East 35th Street. She started coming to some of the MHNA Board Meetings because of her interest in the 34th Street Transitway issue. The next thing she knew, Susan was invited by Debra Taylor to become an MHNA trustee; she was honored to accept.

Also, Susan worked with the PTA at P.S. 116, where her daughter graduated from elementary school. Susan and her husband Steve recently celebrated their 20th anniversary. Susan is an abstract painter.

**Tom Horan** currently serves on the Board of Directors of the 7 Park Avenue Corporation and was nominated to the MHNA Board by John Chadwick. He looks forward to offering an even-handed approach to the issues confronting our community.

Tom is a native New Yorker, born and raised in Brooklyn. After earning a B.S. degree in Business Administration from Fordham in 1970, Tom spent about eight years as a U.S. Air Force pilot flying in the U.S. and other parts of the world, including some combat missions in Southeast Asia during the early 1970s. He joined American Airlines in 1979 and flew several types of airplanes until his retirement in 2008.

Tom's recent volunteer work includes an association with Big Apple Greeters, an organization designed to acquaint non-New Yorkers with the city. Also, he has been a volunteer counselor for the past six summers at The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp in

Ashford, Ct., the organization founded by Paul Newman to bring the summer camp experience to inner-city children.

**Tim Hughes** has lived on 34th Street for 2 and a half years and spent the prior seven years living just up Second Avenue in Tudor City. Born and raised in Toronto, he has lived in New York since 1998 with his wife Leslie when they moved here from Chicago.

Professionally, Tim is a Senior Director with the financial consulting firm Zolfo Cooper, where he advises and works with distressed companies. Tim graduated from the University of Victoria in British Columbia and earned an M.B.A. from Columbia Business School.

In his free time, you will likely find him on a golf course, cooking dinner or working on new objections to the 34th Street Transitway.

**Sam Milgrim** first came to Murray Hill as a weekend visitor in 1978 ... and never left. In fact, when he got married 15 years ago, one of the few non-negotiable issues was that he and his wife live here. Since then, Maggie has come to love our community as much as he does. Sam has served on the Board of Directors of 7 Park Avenue and has always had a keen interest in bettering our community. John Chadwick nominated him for the MHNA Board.

Professionally, Sam is a producer of television, radio and online advertising with many national and international clients, including American Airlines, Subaru of America, J.C. Penney, Cotton Inc.

## Community Briefs

**Fire at Byblos and Frontier Coffee Shop** A five-alarm fire at 39th Street and Third Avenue in the early morning hours of September 10 destroyed the Lebanese restaurant Byblos and its neighbor, Frontier Coffee Shop. Starting around 12:30 AM, the fire required five hours and 200 fire fighters to subdue it.

The restaurants, both family-run businesses, have been longtime neighborhood favorites: Frontier opened in 1974 and Byblos in 1990. Both have vowed to rebuild.



**Promoting Diversity and Respect in Schools** February 14-18 is "Respect for All Week" in the city's public schools. The initiative is designed to foster an inclusive learning environment for all students. "Teaching our students to embrace diversity is essential in preventing hate among future generations," said City Council President Christine Quinn in announcing the event.

**Reprieve for Norman Thomas** In July when a state appellate court ruled unanimously against the city's efforts to close 19 schools it had cited for poor performance, Norman Thomas High School on 34th Street received new life. Norman Thomas is one of five schools in Manhattan saved from the chopping block. As much as the decision was a blow to the Bloomberg administration, it was a major victory for the teachers union, which, along with the New York chapter of the NAACP, had sued the city.

**New Countdown Signals at Crosswalks** The City Council and DOT announced plans to install new countdown signals at some 1,500 intersections "from Park Avenue to Queens Boulevard." This follows the completion of a pilot program that showed that these types of devices can significantly improve safety and reduce accidents at major intersections.

**Silver Alert** In mid-September, the City Council passed legislation (Intro. 270) creating a Silver Alert program. Similar to the Amber Alert program for missing children, the Silver Alert will provide the public with immediate information about missing seniors believed to be in imminent danger or harm. In announcing the program, the Council noted that there are about 250,000 people living with Alzheimer's in New York City.

**Plastics Surgery: Revised Recycling Programs** In the first major revision to the city's residential recycling program since its inception in 1989, the expansion of recycled plastics is of most interest to Murray Hill residents. Currently, the city's recycled plastics are largely limited to containers with narrow tops, such as soda and water bottles or milk jugs. The new legislation would require recycling of all rigid plastic containers, (e.g., yogurt tubs, take-out containers, flower pots and medicine bottles). This part of the bill will not go into effect until the opening of a new recycling facility located in Brooklyn, scheduled for 2012.

**New Hotel Opens** The Setai Fifth Avenue, located between 36th and 37th Streets on Fifth, had its grand opening on November 5. The 60-story tower includes 157 hotel guest rooms (starting at \$95/night) and 57 apartment suites, plus 184 luxury condominiums, a first-floor bar, the Ai Fiori restaurant, a fitness center, and space for executive meetings and social events. The 11,500-square-foot Auriga Spa has black oak and limestone flooring, eleven treatment rooms, wet rooms, showers, a vitality pool, a sauna and steam rooms, and an evening happy hour in the Aqua Lounge. "It has been designed for couples to enjoy the spa experience together."

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## Mark Tracten: President with a Message and a Mandate

Mark Tracten, who served as president of the Murray Hill Committee from 1982-87, was never one to sit on the sidelines. Among his many contributions, three stand out: 1) he started the newsletter, which began publishing in 1973; 2) he helped to rebuild the Eiffel Tower and figured out how to get it out of a 35th Street basement for the 1978 Block Party, and 3) in 1986, he led the drive to save Murray Hill's side streets from high-rise development.

Each of these milestones in Mr. Tracten's Murray Hill resume tells you about the spirit, energy and ingenuity of the man. Now a resident of Fairfield County, Connecticut, where he lives with his wife, Jodi, and works as president of Crown House Publishing/U.S., Mark recently fleshed out these seminal moments.



Marc Tracten in 1988.

"When I first moved to Murray Hill in 1971, I said that we should have a newsletter. I was very vocal about it," he recalls. "I had a background in publishing" – by 1982, Mark was president of Brunner/Mazel Publishers – "so they said, 'Fine, do it.' So, I did."

The *Murray Hill Committee Newsletter* would come to serve as a clarion call for the successful battle to preserve and protect the neighborhood's historic nature. That 1986 community action bears resemblance to our current protest against the 34th Street Transitway. But first an explanation is in order about the Liberation-of-Eiffel-Tower-Murray Hill.

The Street Fair used to have themes each year: *Greening of Murray Hill* (1973), *A Thousand Clowns* (1979), *Caribbean Carnival* (1987), etc. In 1978, the theme was *Murray Hill Goes French*. "Minor Bishop designed an Eiffel Tower," Mark remembers. "We all built it in the basement of the Community Church on 35th Street, but when we'd finished we realized that there was no way to get it outside! So, we disassembled it into three parts and reassembled it once we got it out."

But the defining issue of his presidency was his opposition to the Community Church's contemplated demolition of four brownstones it owned on 35th Street between Park and Madison Avenues. The proposed project included talk

of a "tower" with more than 200 apartments to be built above the church.

"Saving the Community Church brownstones was an interesting battle that lasted for years," Mark says. "We were actually saved when the City Planning Commission unanimously passed a proposal for new zoning regulations to restrict the height of new buildings on Murray Hill's side streets."

Tracten continues: "As far as having an effect on city politics, I think lobbying for the zoning changes was the largest effort that the Murray Hill association undertook. We lobbied hard -- the City Council, our elected representatives, community groups -- and we really had an impact on the community. It was a very big thing for me."

In 1986, from the bully pulpit of his presidency and his column in the MHC Newsletter, Tracten galvanized Murray Hill's "people power." More than 700 residents came to a meeting at the church on March 4. Murray Hillers wrote hundreds of letters, spoke to their neighbors, signed petitions, and took hours of their personal time to attend public hearings. (Does any of this sound familiar?)

In the Winter 1986 President's column, his excitement was palpable: "At exactly 9:53 PM on Thursday, November 6, 1986, after more than twelve long hours of nail-biting suspense, the New York Board of Estimate voted unanimously to endorse the proposal of the City Planning Commission to rezone the mid-blocks of Murray Hill..."

On April 12, 1987, *The New York Times* took notice, quoting Mr. Tracten: "The zoning changes have removed pressure to demolish more buildings so that now we can concentrate our efforts on preservation and improvement of the historic nature of Murray Hill."

Community activism takes many guises: innovator, builder, leader, friend, "nice guy" (everyone mentions the last). For Murray Hill, Mark Tracten has worn them all.

## Transitway—continued from page 5

as well. We urge our members—especially those living in Community Board 5 (west of Madison Avenue from 34th to 40th Streets; west of Lexington for all other blocks north of 14th Street and south of 57th Street) to post their comments and concerns there.

The Transportation Committee of Community Board 6 continues to press DOT, most especially in terms of considering less-invasive alternatives to the current Transitway plan. There is also talk of the three Community Boards concerned—4, 5 and 6—banding together to form a united front to deal with the DOT. We applaud and encourage such cooperation.

Please continue to look to our web site—www.murrayhillnyc.org—for the latest information on public meetings and updates on all transportation issues affecting Murray Hill. There you will also find the letters written on our behalf by our elected officials as well as the various community board resolutions. For the latest information on the 34th Street Transitway, please visit w.34thStreetTransitway.org, which is the web site of our 34th Street Action Committee..



After 10 years of correspondence (and cajoling and hectoring) with the Department of Transportation about installing a speed bump in front of P.S. 116 on East 33rd Street, Burt Rubin reports that we all can now "See Red" from the brake lights of the many vehicles passing directly in front of the entrance to the wonderful neighborhood primary school. Photo: Burt Rubin

## Sweetness and Lights—continued from page 1

by the warmth of song and holiday glögg, many of the merry revelers proceeded on to Trattoria Alba to raise yet one last toast to Murray Hill's 50th Anniversary at the Gala.



Christina, left, and Destiny, who made sure everyone knew "It's FREEZING out here!"

Photo: Sami Steigmann

## The MONC Gave Us a Tenor in Murray Hill

It could be that the hot new singer you will hear at the Metropolitan Opera in coming years actually received his or her big break in auditions held at The New York New Church on November 16, 17, and 18, 2010. An MHNA member, Mary Hobart, is Chair of the Eastern Region auditions, and she lines up the venues. Mary reminds us that Renée Fleming and Fredericka von Stade came to the Met through the Metropolitan Opera National Council (MONC) Auditions.

Anna Martinian, the President of The New Church, also serves as Church Manager on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. When Charlotte Klein and Betty Travis dropped in to visit Anna, she gave them a sneak peek at the auditions. They said they heard "a truly wonderful tenor."

Mrs. Hobart said that winners of the District auditions will compete in the Eastern Region Finals at the 92nd Street Y on January 13. The Friends of the MONC are planning a benefit Gala, featuring these young winners, on February 24 at the Racquet and Tennis Club. The Gala tickets are \$175 for one, \$300 for two, and include entry to the auditions at the Y. For further information about the Gala, contact Mary Hobart at bobhobart@aol.com.

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## Faces of Murray Hill

### *Patricia Nix: An American Icon in the Neighborhood*

by Ravelle Brickman

When Texas-born artist Patricia Nix first saw the townhouse on East 35th Street, it was, in her words, “a dump.” Despite its lofty origins, the house—located on one of the most beautiful streets in the city—had fallen on hard times. It had been converted into a two-family dwelling, its grandeur hidden behind a maze of seven bedrooms and baths.

“But I love old houses,” Patricia said, “and I needed space.” She had just sold her 18th-century house in France. And while her Greenwich Village apartment was large—it had once been the home of President Woodrow Wilson—it was too cramped to hold all the canvases and carved wooden structures that make up the tools of her trade.

Determined to live in Murray Hill, she bought the house in 1997 and quickly gutted its interior, installing an elevator to haul heavy art equipment up to her fifth-floor studio. Gradually, the house was restored to its Victorian glory, with three bedrooms, a library, a parlor, a dining room, kitchen, sunroom and garden, all on the lower floors. Color, predominantly red, floods every room.

Although her work is on view at museums around the world—including the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C.—she maintains a large personal col-

lection of her favorite work. One of the most striking of these is a portrait of Elizabeth the First, adorned in beetles. Lining the walls of every room are paintings of haunted kings and queens, based on playing cards, and towering totems, altars and icons that convey an unsettling sense of mysticism and eroticism.

Critics have hailed her work as “American Baroque,” declaring her a successor to a line of artists as different as Georgia O’Keefe, Joseph Cornell and Henri Matisse. A member of the National Academy of Design since 1992, she is recognized as one of the top oil painters in the U.S.

Patricia Nix was born in a small town in the southwest. An only child, she began painting at the age of 11. Following an early marriage and the birth of three children, she began commuting to New York, where she studied with some of America’s leading artists at the New School and the Art Students League in 1972. Within five years, she had landed her own show at a top gallery on Madison Avenue. By 1984, she had settled in New York for good.

Describing herself as “frantic,” Patricia is currently preparing for two shows: a retrospective at the museum in Lubbock, TX, which opens on February 3, and an exhibition of totems, opening February 10th at the Dillon Gallery in Chelsea (555 West 25th Street, between 10th and 11th Avenues.)

Although her art has evolved over the years—from the lush colors and textures of her early flower paintings to the stark images of recent altars and icons—her culinary skills have remained the same. Despite a 20-foot-long state-of-the-art kitchen, Patricia Nix has a repertoire of just one dish. “It’s spaghetti Bolognese,” she said. “I tell my guests, don’t you dare eat that anywhere else. It’s the only thing I can cook!”

*Ravelle Brickman is a freelance writer and editor who teaches at NYU.*



*Photos: Sami Steigmann*

### Artistic Pedigree from the Ground Up

The house that Patricia Nix bought in 1997 has its own link to the arts. Built in 1856 by David Stewart, a wealthy linen merchant, the house was a gift for his daughter, Isabella Stewart, who was then 16 years old. Isabella married Jack Lowell Gardner and settled in Boston, where she became a leading patron of the arts. For John Singer Sargent’s 1888 portrait of her, Mrs. Gardner dressed in a dark, sensual dress evoking the artist’s famous painting of “Madame X.” (She encouraged comparison.) Isabella studied art at Harvard and subsequently amassed a stunning collection of Renaissance and Impressionist art, now housed in the Gardner Museum.

Other well known occupants of the house include the actors Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy, who were married in 1942 and lived there for most of the ‘40s and ‘50s. —RB