

# Boerum Hill Bulletin

THE BOERUM HILL ASSOCIATION IS A VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION OF RESIDENTS OF BOERUM HILL. WE SEEK TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE UNIQUE QUALITIES OF OUR NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGH ADVOCACY, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY BUILDING. VISIT US ON THE WEB AT [WWW.BOERUMHILLBROOKLYN.ORG](http://WWW.BOERUMHILLBROOKLYN.ORG)

## SIXTEEN SYCAMORES PARK

### MEMBERS OF THE BOARD:

- Howard Kolins, President
- James Forrester, Secretary
- Rose Weber, Treasurer \*
- Doug Barnes
- Ben Barrett
- Noam Berk
- Larry Burda
- Daughtry Carstarphen
- Genevieve Christy
- Christian Haag
- Susan Kaplan
- Trudy Katzer
- Leslie Lewis
- Jean Manon
- Hannah Mason
- Stephen Radacinski
- Dwight Smith
- Chuck Wells
- Sarah Wikenczy

(\*non-board member)

Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month from September through June at 7:00pm in the Mugavero Center.

Sixteen Sycamores Park is a beautiful park located on the corner of Schermerhorn Street & 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in Boerum Hill. It features two separate play areas with climbing equipment and slides; three handball courts; two water fountains; swings; sprinklers and what was once a thriving comfort station. It is by far the largest park in the neighborhood, but many residents aren't aware that it exists.

"Friends of Sixteen Sycamores Park" is a group of residents committed to changing that, and to bringing much-needed capital investment to the park. We have been working with CB2, David Yassky's office, and the NYC Parks Department to secure over \$1 million to upgrade the equipment, provide play zones that accom-

modate children and families as well as individuals, and to reopen the comfort station. We are also organizing volunteers for clean-up days, increasing awareness of the park and its assets, and planning events such as family film nights to happen in the park. Our first work day will be **Saturday, July 18<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 1 pm**. We are also planning our first **Family Film Night for early September, sponsored by Annie's Blue Ribbon General Store**, and are working with more local merchants to publi-



cize and sponsor all our great events.

**Join us!** We can be reached through the BHA, or you can contact Daughtry Carstarphen at [dcarstar@yahoo.com](mailto:dcarstar@yahoo.com).



### HAL BOBROW, IN MEMORIAM BY L. LEWIS

I am pleased to write this in memory of Hal Bobrow, whose loyalty to the 84<sup>th</sup> Precinct will always be remembered, and much missed.

In the 25 years that I attended the 84<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Council meetings, I would glance at Hal, always in his seat in the first row, and take comfort that all was well in our community.

He often participated by shar-

ing his thoughts and comments with the Police and the public.

Now when I drive past his house on State Street, I have to resist stopping to drop off the meeting announcement flyers which he dependably distributed in the neighborhood all those years.

I, along with many others, will always remember that Hal was well thought of as a good

neighbor and vocal participant in this community. He will be missed.

Leslie Lewis, President  
84<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Council

*Hal's sister, June Firestone, requests that anyone wishing to honor his memory make a donation to: Calvary Hospital Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 5173, Toms River, NJ 08754*

## FULTON STREET HISTORY BY ERIK FORTMEYER

Take a walk up Hoyt Street towards the subway stop on Fulton Street and you cannot miss seeing the faded remains of the old Martin's Department Store at the head of the street. The splotchy off-white building is covered with decorative arches. Instinctively, one knows that the building has plenty of history in its stone walls.

And it does. About half way up the front of the building on the sides, you will see a lion emblem with the letters



“HO” incised. Walk down the Duffield Street side and you will see “1890 OFFERMAN BUILDING 1892”. Henry Offerman, a millionaire sugar industry magnate, intended his building to be a large department store. The architect was Peter J. Lauritzen who favored the Romanesque Revival style inspired by medieval architecture. Originally the building was constructed for Samuel Wechsler to be a department store specializing in dry goods. Samuel was the brother of Joseph Wechsler, a partner with Abraham Abraham, in a department store that eventually evolved into Abraham & Straus. The Offerman Building was constructed in stages, its steel and iron core covered with limestone, terra cotta, and buff-colored brick. It rose up eight stories. The first story was capped by arches with plate glass, level with the tracks of the old Fulton “E1” train that would pass by. The entrance designed to impress patrons and to stand out from the many other department stores nearby.

There were modern features: incandescent electric lights, seven lavish elevators, and a pneumatic cash system. You could purchase anything from fancy clothing to furniture to furs to fancy opera glasses.

The store had various tenants 1909, when it was converted to offices with tenant stores. Eventually, in 1922, one tenant grew large enough to purchase the whole building.

The store was fully remodeled and opened in 1924 as Martin's Department Store to great success. The owner advocated the demolition of the Fulton “E1” and, when it was removed in 1941, it opened up the golden era of the Fulton Street shopping corridor.

For many years, Martin's was *the* place for Brooklyn brides. The flight of middle class Brooklyn families to the suburbs slowly sapped Martin's patrons until the store closed in 1979. It was landmarked by the City in 2005.



S. WECHSLER & BRO.'S NEW STORE.

## BOCACA ARTS FESTIVAL

**July 17th - July 26th**

The BoCoCa Arts Festival taps into the unique and varied aspects of the Boerum Hill, Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens and Gowanus communities to support artistic expression and our local businesses, while providing entertainment and inspiration to the community.

The Festival will present a collection of outstanding emerging works in the fields of Art, Music, Theater, and Performance Art. Staged in unconventional venues, the performances will reflect the truthful and exciting expression of human aspiration evident throughout our communities. **Check the website and join the festival!**

**Website:** [www.bococaartsfestival.com](http://www.bococaartsfestival.com)

**Contact:** [info@bococaartsfestival.com](mailto:info@bococaartsfestival.com)



**THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Dear Neighbors,

I'm honored to accept the President's chair and look forward to working to preserve and promote Boerum Hill. We're concerned about the many issues affect our quality of life in our neighborhood.

As an organization we've been in favor of responsible and thoughtful development

so the Atlantic Yards continues to be a focus for us. Similarly, the reopening and possible expansion of the House of Detention is also at the top of our list.

Our members strive to make a better home for ourselves and our neighbors so join us in building the Douglass/ Greene Park and 16 Sycamores. Crime, traffic

and noise are some of the other challenges we face.

Please become an active member and support our activities.

Gratefully,

Howard Kolins

**OUR FIRST HISTORIC PUB WALK**

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, a diverse crowd of 16 attendees took the first Historic Pub Walk sponsored by the BHA. Our local historian, Erik Fortmeyer, came armed with a bunch of wonderful photos and an old bottle from an Atlantic Avenue brewery.

He painted a picture of days and nights in Boerum Hill past. As the evening journey progressed from The Brazen Head to the Brooklyn Inn to Hanks Bar, the history was complemented by the cheerful banter of neighbors and

cordial bartenders.

Board member Chuck Wells will be hosting the **next Pub Walks on July 14<sup>th</sup> and August 11<sup>th</sup>**. Look for information on our web site.

**PLANT SALE AND GREENING DAY**

Each Spring, the Hoyt Street Association's Annual Plant Sale brings neighbors together so that Boerum Hill can be awash in flowers and verdant greenery.

DuBick, Dwight Smith, Howard Kolins, Keith Hershberger, Beth Winson and Jack Fortmeyer, who came together for this great neighborhood tradition.

contact Hoyt Street Association president, Margaret Cusack: [cusackart@aol.com](mailto:cusackart@aol.com) or 718.237.0145

The torrential rain this year did not deter the many brave volunteers from raising almost \$6000 profit. The money not only supports the Hoyt Street Garden, but also funds the Hoyt Street Association Community Funding Project (HSACFP), which gives grants to local individuals and organizations who want to give back to the area and better the neighborhood.

They led an army of over 60 "green team" volunteers who distributed order forms, shopped for plants at the Brooklyn Terminal Market, put together orders and sold plants -- even during the relentless pouring rain!



**GREENING DAY**

The Plant Sale is one of the best events in Boerum Hill and it's also a great place for neighbors to get to know each other. Next Spring, we hope you will send in your order form and that you will volunteer for the "green team."

In tandem with the plant sale, the Boerum Hill Association held Greening Day when free compost and mulch was available in the Mugavero parking lot.

For many years, local gardener, Martin Sticht, (far right), was the main organizer of the Plant Sale, but this year he decided to retire and "pass the green baton" on to others. He generously downloaded his knowledge to a core "green team" of volunteer leaders: Margaret Cusack, Danna Mitchell, Michael

No experience is necessary! To sign up and/or to receive a HSACFP grant application (deadline: 10/20/09),

The BHA, appreciates our wonderful greenery, and wishes to thank, landscape designer and gardening expert, Kristen Austin for coordinating the event again this year.

**NATIONAL NIGHT AGAINST CRIME**

Each year we celebrate the successful partnerships between our Police departments and our communities on the National Night Out Against Crime. This year it takes place on **Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup>**.

takes part, joined by our elected officials, community leaders, neighbors and children. The 84<sup>th</sup> Precinct's event will be held at **Borough Hall Plaza commencing at 6:30 PM.**

from the Mayors Office, Borough President Marty Markowitz and other elected officials, there will be FREE Pony rides, ice cream, face painting, a cookout, entertainment and refreshments.

Every New York City Police Precinct

After the formal opening with greetings

Please come -- bring your entire family!

## WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

**Susan Kaplan**, of Wyckoff Street, is an attorney and poet who has lived in the neighborhood for over ten years. Her children attended P.S. 38 and as part of her real estate practice, she has been involved in numerous house and condo sales throughout the community. Her practice also includes litigation and family law. As a poet, she has taught at the Virginia Military Institute and the University of Cambridge. She was also part of the editorial team for the *Mississippi Review* and has published in such journals as *Poetry* and *Boulevard*. As a participant in keeping the neighborhood "low and lovely", Susan is interested in the zoning issues that control overgrowth with regards to density and building-height limits.

**Daughtry Carstarphen** is an architect, mother and musician who has lived on State Street in Boerum Hill since 2002. As an architect, she is concerned with providing decent, inspiring housing and community spaces to nonprofit organizations serving people of all ages and walks of life. She has participated in design competitions for

Habitat for Humanity, the September 11th Memorial Design Competition, and ReVisioning Coney Island. Daughtry won honorable mention for "Loop House" - a water-saving green design in the Southwest. In addition, she helped to found "Friends of Sixteen Sycamores Park" and is working with neighbors to raise money, awareness and investment in neighborhood parks. She has also worked at the Brooklyn Bureau of the Department of City Planning and has a vested interest in smart, scaled development.

**Noam P. Berk** currently resides on Dean Street and has lived in Boerum Hill since 2000 and in Brooklyn since 1995. He is married with three children aged 8, 6 and 3. He is a proprietor of a boutique investment bank focused on natural resource transactions in the U.S., Latin America and the Caribbean. Noam told us, "Now that I have a more flexible work schedule, I want to contribute more to the community in which my children have, and will, grow up in, particularly in matters concerning appropriate development, health and safety. "

**Stephen P. Radacinski**, a Hoyt Street resident, who moved to Boerum Hill in 1982 and who currently works at a security consultant. He was a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in the U.S. Army and retired from NYPD at rank of Sergeant after 20 years. Steve has been a member of the Hoyt Street Association since 1983 and the BHA since 1985.

**Larry Burda** is another resident of Hoyt Street. He is married with two children, 2 and 4 ½. Larry is president of Burda Construction and has truly made Brooklyn a better place through his work. His company recently completed the renovation of an existing Bergen Street brownstone which included all new structural and mechanical elements as well as an elevator. Green features included solar heating, environmentally friendly recycled materials and a rainwater harvesting tank.

The current members of the board welcome these neighbors and look forward to working with them on issues that concern all residents of Boerum Hill.

## THOUGHTS ON ATLANTIC YARDS BY H. KOLINS

Many Boerum Hillers continue to be frustrated by the lack of community input and oversight at every stage of this project.

The current plan is for a much less exciting arena surrounded by many parking lots. This is exactly the result we feared would develop if construction lagged.

Much of the public benefit is now lost, however the city will still be paying out large sums for infrastructure. In addition to the costs, the quality of life in this area has not been considered as part of the plan.

This project has always felt out of step with the character of brownstone Brooklyn. Residents treasure the low density and leafy streets that encourage stoop sitting

and pedestrian activity.

While we accept that business development, affordable housing and job creation are needed in Brooklyn, this 22 acre project has never felt like it belonged in this borough. Out of step, out of context and just over built.

Many of our elected officials have objected to the current state of affairs. I urge you to contact them and share your thoughts.

Organizations such as Brooklyn Speaks and Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn continue to oppose the project. Go to their websites for more information:

[www.brooklynspeaks.net](http://www.brooklynspeaks.net)

[www.developdontdestroy.org](http://www.developdontdestroy.org)



The current plan shows the revised arena design.





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[www.boerumhillbrooklyn.org](http://www.boerumhillbrooklyn.org)

### **Growing a better Boerum Hill**

## **C H E C K I T O U T**

### **Linger Café and Lounge**

At 533 Atlantic Avenue, between 3rd and 4th Avenues. This eco-friendly establishment will focus on natural cooking and fresh ingredients. For more information go to [www.lingercafelounge.com](http://www.lingercafelounge.com) or just stop by! Opens July 11th.

**The Brooklyn Beet CSA** (community supported agriculture) is off to a fresh and flavorful start, as local produce has started arriving from a small family-run farm in Goshen New York. There may be a few shares left for sale. Check them out at <http://www.brooklynbeetcsa.blogspot.com>

### **"Sorry for Blocking Your Car"**

**Placards** are available on the BHA website. Although double parking for

street cleaning is clearly illegal, the Police do look the other way if we behave. The placard is intended for use during alternate side parking periods to balance the competing problems of street sanitation and the shortage of available parking places. You just put your phone number in the windshield and move your car when called. Go to [www.boerumhillbrooklyn.org](http://www.boerumhillbrooklyn.org) and print out the form.

### **La Flor del Paraiso**

At 491 Atlantic Avenue serves Mexican dishes from burritos to enchiladas, Puerto Rican mofongo, Cuban sandwiches and more. Open for low cost lunch and dinner.

### **Ocean View Dinner**

At 515 Atlantic, at the corner of Third Avenue, the newly re-opened dinner

has a full menu and is open 24 hours.

**Closed** — **Govinda's Organic Market** at 387 Atlantic.

### **Atomic Wings**

Buffalo Wings, Chicken Littles with all kinds of sauces and dips from sane (mild) to insane (suicidal). Burgers, wraps, soups, chili and salads are also on hand. 134 Smith Street btw Bergen and Dean Streets.

### **BBQ**

It was Gravy, it was Trout and now its without a name but it sells BBQ. Ribs, pork, chicken and sides including slaw, beans and greens. At 102 Smith on the corner of Pacific Street.

### **JOIN THE BHA**

Help us be advocates for Boerum Hill by becoming a member. Join us on the web at [www.boerumhillbrooklyn.org](http://www.boerumhillbrooklyn.org)