



VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

Jackson Heights – “A Garden in the City”

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Jackson Heights
Beautification Group

President's Message

Despite Hard Times, Let's Celebrate and Work to Make Things Better

By Len Maniace

We're getting close to the Holiday Season vortex, the swirl of shopping, parties, dinners, religious services and family gatherings from which there is no escape. JHBG will be doing its part to make the holidays a little more community spirited. On **Tuesday, Dec. 16** we will host our annual **Jackson Heights Holiday Lighting Ceremony** at the Post Office on 37th Ave.

It's not Rockefeller Center, but our 5 p.m. event is one quite fitting for Jackson Heights, which at its best is a small town in the big city—you know, the kind of place where you meet three acquaintances walking to the supermarket.

The ceremony will feature the lighting of a Christmas tree—it is a real tree, one planted in the Post Office garden and decorated for the first time last year—as well as the lighting of a menorah to celebrate the eight days of Hanukkah. We will have clergy members, elected officials and most important—children from local schools who will sing carols and other holiday tunes. And to finish it off there will be hot chocolate, so hope for some holiday-like weather. Whether you are around all day or are just getting home from work, please join us.

We could use more help on the day of the lighting. If you'd like to volunteer, contact us as soon as possible at info@jhb.org, and put “Holiday Volunteer” in the subject line.



USPS Dog

Our first fall holiday event was our annual Halloween Parade along 37th Ave., from 89th St. to the mid-70s, where we distributed 3,200 goodie bags to the children who participated.

(cont. p. 2)

December Concert Series

By Pat Glunt

Our Jackson Heights Orchestra has two performances scheduled for December. The first, on Dec. 7 at 2 p.m., is at the Lutheran Church of Our Savior, 132 Jefferson Ave., in Mineola.

The second is right here in Jackson Heights, on Dec. 10 at 7:30 p.m. at the United Methodist Community Church, 81-10 35th Ave. There will be a reception following in the church library.

Both concerts are free, but there is a suggested donation of \$10 for the general public and \$5 for students and seniors.

Each performance will last about an hour and 20 minutes without an intermission.

Music will be by Mozart, Haydn, Tchaikovsky, Ovanin, Bizet, Tosti and Warlock. The soloist is Tenor Ulises Solano.

We hope to see you at one of our opening concerts of our third season!

Pat founded the orchestra in Sept. 2012, and it has performed eight concerts to date. The orchestra operates under the banner of JHBG, making Pat a JHBG board member. Some of her responsibilities include concert programming, running weekly rehearsals, building membership in the volunteer orchestra, finding soloists and community outreach.



December Concerts—Coming Soon!

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News to Announce: Past & Present Events

JHBG's Holiday Lighting Ceremony, Dec. 16, 5 p.m., in front of the Post Office on 37th Ave.

JHBG's December Concert Series (see the cover).

JHBG's 24th Annual Halloween Parade (see p. 4).

JHBG receives a grant from Queens Borough President Melinda Katz to expand JH SCRAPS, the composting area, in 2015.

NY1 News films at JH SCRAPS.

JHBG meets with Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding violations at two buildings (see p. 6).

President's Message *(cont. from cover)*

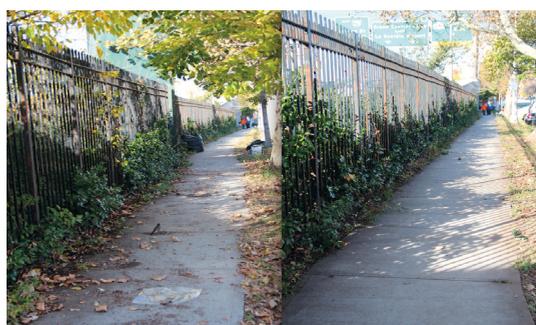
Among the many deserving thanks are JHBG members of the board and parade cochairs Ed Westley, Nuala O’Doherty and John McCaffrey, as well as parade committee members Janet Kelly, Patti Lowenhaupt, Emma Brandt and John Cebollero. John also designed this year’s great Halloween poster. See Ed Westley’s article on the Halloween Parade, which includes a list of local merchants you can support through your shopping dollars.

2014 was a tough year, but we are looking forward to better times. Too many people still face tough times in a bad economy. If you can, please help them out. A fire at the Bruson Building destroyed the offices of local businesses, but many operations are continuing. Frank’s Pharmacy reopened a few blocks from its old home in October, and the reopening of Armondo's is planned for the site now occupied by the restaurant Trieste, at 73-16 Northern Blvd., on Feb. 1, 2015.

We are also awaiting NYC Parks to set a date to present the department’s plan for a redesigned and enlarged Travers Park, which will include the 78th St. Pedestrian Plaza and Staunton Field. We have been working to improve Travers Park since JHBG was founded more than 26 years ago. We intend to continue.

Also promising is the future of the 37th Rd. Pedestrian Plaza, between 73rd St. and 74th St., also known as Diversity Plaza. The Department of Transportation held a visioning session on Saturday, Oct. 18 to hear how residents and businesses would like New York City to spend some \$2.5 million set aside for a plaza redesign. JHBG is a member of Friends of Diversity Plaza, a coalition of community groups helping to create the plaza (see the article by Shekar Krishnan in this issue).

There are two main ways you can help us with our ongoing mission, which is to preserve, restore, revitalize and maintain the community of Jackson Heights. This includes our beautification and holiday work: You can volunteer for our activities (write to us at info@jhb.org), and you can donate to help us fund our many projects. Our standard \$25 yearly contribution works out to only 7 cents per day. We think the work we do is worth it! We hope you agree. Larger contributions are accepted, too, of course. You can make a tax-deductible donation online at www.jhb.org/donate, or by mailing the form in this newsletter, along with a check. We thank you!



Leaf Cleanup on 69th St.

Len has been a journalist for more than 30 years, ever since first working for Gannett newspapers. He and his wife Barbara moved to JH in 1988 and soon joined JHBG. They have two sons. Len is JHBG president, a freelance writer/editor and tree hugger. He brought the Greenmarket to JH; cofounded Summer Sundays in the Park; and initiated the Green Agenda, a community outreach program that demonstrated widespread support for making Jackson Heights a greener place. As president, Len is helping strengthen JHBG for its second 25 years and is leading its street-tree care program, Tree LC.

Editor's Take

By Lila M. Stromer

Welcome to this issue of *Views from the Heights*.

You may notice in this issue the number of JH events that occurred with the help of volunteers...or more accurately, would not have occurred without them. For example, without an army of volunteers, there would not have been a Halloween Parade (see Ed Westley's article). Or, the visioning meeting on Diversity Plaza that Shekar Krishnan writes about would not have occurred without volunteer groups such as Friends of Diversity Plaza and JHBG, or residents taking the time to make their voices heard.

Time is a valuable asset, and no one has enough of it. So why volunteer when there are so many other ways to spend your time? This is a question that has as many answers as there are people who volunteer their time and energy. When I lived in Chicago, I volunteered at an animal shelter. Why did I volunteer there? My husband and I had lost two cats in a six-month period. The difficulty in making the decision to euthanize was particularly hard with the first cat because my husband was out of town, making the decision all mine. Six months later, we lost the first cat we ever adopted. I began to volunteer, quite honestly, as a healing process. But over the next seven years, my reasons for volunteering there changed. I copyedited because I saw a need, I led training for new volunteers because I was asked and I did pet outreach at a nursing home because a slot opened. The funny thing about volunteering, though, is that there are always unexpected benefits. My résumé grew, I gained confidence and I learned patience. I also made friends with shelter staff and volunteers with whom I'm still in touch, and—not surprisingly—adopted a cute little yellow cat who stole our hearts. I only stopped volunteering because we moved to New York in Aug. 2013.

After moving to JH, I wanted to volunteer where I could play with nature. I stumbled across JHBG when I attended their holiday concert last December. One year later, and I am the editor of this newsletter. In this past year, through JHBG, I've learned about composting—and now donate our scraps, met new people who make Jackson Heights feel more like home and am learning skills in creating this newsletter. Volunteering is funny that way, and stories abound of how much people get out of volunteering when that was never their motivation.

If you saw trees being watered on 37th Ave., you saw JHBG members and volunteers working together. When



you see bright daffodils in front of the post office next spring, you'll think of the Brownie troops that Evie McKenna describes in this issue. If you enjoy the flowerbeds on 37th Ave., you can thank the storeowners who volunteer to tend them.

JHBG is an all-volunteer organization. Among other things, it actively works with the city and other groups to maintain the historic district (see Daniel Karatzas and Len Maniace's article), manages the compost center (see Lenny Olsson and Melissa Zavala's article), organizes the summer and holiday concerts (see Pat Glunt's article; and the orchestra is also all volunteer!), heads the Halloween Parade and Holiday Lighting Ceremony, oversees the Historic Weekend and even runs JHCrew, the dog run. When I went to the holiday concert last year, I had no idea what JHBG did. Now I know that JHBG is important in keeping Jackson Heights one of the greenest and most livable neighborhoods in the city, and it always needs help to carry out its many projects. Check this issue's calendar of events to see what is happening through the end of the year. If you would like to volunteer, please email info@jhb.org. You can volunteer as much or as little as fits your schedule. Another way to help support JHBG is financially, as all these projects cost money. You can make a donation using the donation page in this newsletter or online at www.jhb.org/donate. Everything helps, and everything is appreciated!

Until next time...

This is Lila's second issue as the editor. She is a freelance editor by trade, working with academic, business and creative clients. For JHBG, she has spent one sunny afternoon each at the compost center, mulching and painting at Travers Park and watering trees on 37th Ave. She has lived in Jackson Heights since Aug. 2013.



Ghosts and Goblins at the Halloween Parade

24th Annual Children's Halloween Parade: Largest Children's Halloween Parade in NYC

By Edwin O'Keefe Westley

On Friday, Oct. 31, at 5:00 p.m., the marchers started the 24th Annual Children's Halloween Parade. It was a grand evening for a parade filled with ghosts, goblins, pirates and witches.

The Grand Marshals were Frank Buonagurio (of Frank's Pharmacy), Jerry Crisci (of Armondo's Italian Restaurant) and Anna Dioguardi (of Queens Community House). Marching behind the Jackson Heights Beautification Group banner were State Senator José Peralta, Assembly Member Francisco Moya, Council Members Daniel Dromm and Julissa Ferriera, Judge Rudolph Greco and Len Maniace, the president of JHBG, which organized the parade. The marching band from IS 230, the "Flying Puppets," provided the musical entertainment.



Each group of marchers carried different colored balloons, making everything festive. There were thousands of marchers, including costumed children from PS 69, 149, 212, 222, 228 and 280; 82nd Street Academics; the Garden School; Jackson Heights Early Learning Center; Lexington Center for the Deaf; and St. Joan of Arc. Organizations included Brownie Troop 4269, Community Board Q3, Girl Scout Troop 4208, Neighborhood Parents and Children and Performing Arts Conservancy of New York. It is no wonder that this is the largest children's Halloween parade in the metro region!

Prior to the parade, Key Club Members from Newton High School and the Friends of the Parade stuffed 3,200 treat bags; the Cadet Explorers from the 115th Precinct assisted in handing them out at the end of the parade.

Following the parade, the volunteers attended a well-deserved reception provided by JHBG.

The parade recognized Bill Kresse, who passed away earlier this year. He was the extraordinary artist who for 25 years designed the Halloween Parade posters.

It took a small army to create the treat bags and make this parade a success, and JHBG could not have produced this parade without so much help from volunteers. Many local companies, groups and individuals supported this parade financially, with goody donations and/or with manpower. Please patronize these local heroes, and thank them for supporting events in Jackson Heights. Buying local really does help our community. As a reminder, "Buy Local" Small Business Saturday is Nov. 29. JHBG deeply thanks all the merchants, groups and individuals listed on the next page.



As examples of the support given to make the parade an overwhelming success, Dime Savings Bank donated the 3,200 treat bags, Foodtown donated 3,200 fruit drinks and Burger King (82nd St.) donated 3,200 coupons; and the Coca Cola Bottling Company donated 16 cases of drinks for the volunteer reception.



Mark your calendar for next year! The parade will be on Saturday, Oct. 31, 2015.



Frozen & Friends

Ed began volunteering with JHBG in the early 1990s. His assignment was cleaning up broken glass and dog poop each Saturday with the Friends of Travers Park. It has gotten much better since JHBG established the JHCrew's dog run! He is a past president and the current secretary of the JHBG Board.

JHBG thanks the following businesses, groups and individuals for supporting the 2014 Halloween Parade:

- 37th Avenue Photo
- 82nd Street Partnership
- 82nd Street Tenants Corp.
- Black Tie Cleaners
- Brown's Army & Navy
- Byran Pu-Folkes Esq.
- Burger King (on 82nd street)
- Cadet Explorers, 115th Precinct
- Capital One Bank
- Coca Cola Bottling Company
- COSTCO
- Dime Savings Bank
- Abraham Dyzenhaus, DDS
- Foodtown
- Frank's Pharmacy
- Friends of the Parade
- HSBC Bank
- Italian Farms
- Jackson Heights Jewish Center
- Jackson House Restaurant
- Joseph Lock and Alarm
- Key Club Members, Newtown High School
- Kiwanis Club of Jackson Heights
- Koeppel Nissan
- Lety's Bakery & Cafe
- New Peking Kitchen
- Suzanne Knoble
- Noah's Ark Pet Clinic
- Olivos Opticians
- Queens County Federal Savings
- San Andresito Jewelry
- Schnier Eye Care Center
- TD Bank
- Toyota Corp.
- Ultima Florist



The 7 Train



A Mirror



Len Maniace, Ed Westley & Jerry Cresci



Handing Out Treat Bags



Personal Trainer



Filling Treat Bags

Many more Halloween Parade photos are available on JHBG's website and Facebook page.



Eyes on the Street Spot Landmark Violations, Halting Construction

By Daniel Karatzas and Len Maniace

Phone calls by sharp-eyed JH residents to the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) led that agency to halt exterior renovations on two apartment buildings where work did not conform to permits.

The two buildings are the Robert Morris Apartments at 79-02 and 79-28 37th Ave., and Ivy Court at 34-09 83rd St. and 34-10 84th St.

As a result of the complaints, a contractor appeared to be correcting the violation at the Robert Morris Apartments shortly before this newsletter went to print. The problem was a poor-quality pointing job. Pointing is the replacement of mortar between bricks. The original work started in mid-October, and it quickly became clear something was wrong. Unlike the existing mortar, which is tannish and unobtrusive, the new mortar is bright white and thick. Despite a permit from LPC that says the new mortar will match what is there, the new work looked nothing like it.



What difference can mortar make? Take a look at a similar apartment building also on the south side of 37th Ave., across 80th St. A bad pointing job left large white splotches across the face of what is an otherwise nice-looking apartment building.

The fact that this sloppy renovation took place several years ago—but after creation of the Jackson Heights landmark district—should serve as a warning of what can happen when residents do not report violations to the LPC.

Here's some history on the Robert Morris Apartments. They were designed by Edward A. Adelson and completed in 1929. The two six-story buildings have one story of commercial storefronts along 37th Ave. and five stories of apartments. In addition to pointing work, the renovation is to include repairs to the buildings' metal cornices.

Construction work at Ivy Court was reported to the LPC because no permits were visible on the buildings, which is a violation. It turns out the owners had obtained a permit but were doing work—replacing bricks—that the LPC had never approved. There are several earlier examples of bricks being replaced that did not match existing bricks, including at the Greystones several years ago.

As for Ivy Court, Andrew J. Thomas designed this two-building garden apartment complex in 1924. The buildings form two U-shapes, which enclose a small interior garden with every apartment having a view of both the garden and the street. Late last year these buildings were sold for a handsome price, and soon thereafter a sidewalk shed was installed around them, though construction started only recently.

So what can you do to protect the Jackson Heights Historic District and keep our neighborhood a distinctive-looking place?

1. Look for permits on a first-floor door or window:
 - ☞ By law, permits are to be visible to passersby on the street. This includes Department of Buildings and/or LPC permits.
2. If there are no visible LPC permits, contact the LPC's enforcement department:
 - ☎ Call 212-669-7950.
 - ✉ Email Kate Rice at krice@lpc.nyc.gov.
3. If there is an LPC permit but the work does not look appropriate:
 - ☞ Contact the enforcement department.

Jackson Heights has come a long way since a 36-block stretch of the neighborhood was designated an historic district by the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1993. It is up to all of us to make sure that the integrity of our built environment is properly maintained.

Dan is a native of Jackson Heights, who returned to seek his fortune on Wall Street after graduate school and working for IBM in upstate New York. After 15 years on Wall Street, and literally writing the book on the history of this area, Jackson Heights: A Garden in the City, he turned his attention to selling residential real estate in Jackson Heights. He is JHBG's go-to guy on architecture, is in charge of the Historic Weekend and works with the LPC on maintaining the historic district.

Len's bio appears with the President's Message on p. 2.



Ketchup, Mustard & Hotdog

A Community Vision for Our Little Plaza With a Big Message

By Shekar Krishnan

On Saturday, Oct. 18, NYC's Department of Transportation (DOT), in conjunction with Chhaya, the Office of Council Member Daniel Dromm, SUKHI, Friends of Diversity Plaza and Neighborhood Plaza Partnership held a community-based public visioning session for Diversity Plaza. Held at PS 69 and cosponsored by a broad array of neighborhood organizations, partners and elected officials, the event was an opportunity for the community of Jackson Heights to share their thoughts and to collectively envision what Diversity Plaza can mean for us. The session was immensely successful. It drew the largest crowd—more than 130 individuals attended—that an event around Diversity Plaza has ever had.

The visioning session capped a year of accomplishments for Friends of Diversity Plaza (FDP), and major progress for the plaza itself. Formed in fall 2013, FDP is a coalition of neighborhood organizations (including Jackson Heights Beautification Group), activists and residents committed to making Diversity Plaza a vibrant and welcoming community space. It envisions Diversity Plaza as a celebration of our neighborhood's unity—a gateway to Jackson Heights. Over the last year, FDP has worked to organize different events, both formal and informal, to showcase the significant potential of this plaza to bring our community together around a shared open space. In December 2013, FDP helped SUKHI with its annual holiday tree lighting festival; the following May the group organized an informal “coffee/chai hour” on the plaza for neighbors to relax and socialize with each other; and June was FDP's Jackson Heights Arts Festival, celebrating the extraordinary talent of local artists and musicians. Following this series of events, FDP led the community's planning for the neighborhood visioning session in October.

Located at the entrance to Jackson Heights, near the Roosevelt Ave./74th St.-Broadway subway station, Diversity Plaza has the potential to be, and is, our neighborhood's town square—bringing our community together for a wide variety of cultural events, Community Board meetings and even a televised presidential debate in 2012. A culmination of all the preceding events, the visioning session was the kick-off activity for NYC's capital funding process for the plaza. It was our neighborhood's opportunity to share with the city our hopes, aspirations and priorities for the plaza—what we as a community want to see for our town square. The excitement was palpable!

The session began with a presentation by the city, laying out possibilities for what the plaza could look like and their planned timeline for municipal development of the space. The first stage of this timeline for DOT was to solicit feedback from the community through the visioning session. This was the kick-off process of the design and construction of the plaza, which will take an estimated two years, with an anticipated end date in 2017.

Following this presentation, the session broke out into small groups of attendees at each of the tables in PS 69's cafeteria. Poring over a large street map of the plaza at each table and engaged in lively discussion with their fellow group members, residents chatted eagerly about their ideas for improving the plaza as a neighborhood space. They sketched their thoughts on the maps and together truly envisioned the possibilities for the plaza.

Forty-five minutes later, everyone reconvened. Each group went to the podium and presented their ideas to the room, illustrating with their map their thoughts for the space.



A Breakout Group

A remarkably diverse crowd of community members—residents, activists, artists and local merchants to name a few—participated in this exercise. Everyone was captivated by each other's presentations, and many ideas were met with enthusiasm. There were suggestions for ways: to make the space greener and more environmentally sustainable; to install a local map and sign of Jackson Heights at the plaza; to make the space more welcoming for families and children of our neighborhood; and to facilitate art displays or celebrate the cultural diversity of our neighborhood through sculpture.

At the visioning session, the possibilities for the plaza were endless and the room was abuzz with conversation about what it could mean for our neighborhood. The event reflected the vibrancy of our neighborhood and the civic commitment of our residents to improve a community space so aptly named. It bodes incredibly well for the future of this space. As the design process moves forward, Jackson Heights has made it clear that it will make its collective voice heard about what this little plaza with a big message means to us!

Shekar is the chair of Friends of Diversity Plaza. JHBG has been a member of the coalition since its inception.

JHBG Winter 2014 Events Schedule

JHBG invites your participation in the following events. Stay the entire time, part of the time, offer your expertise, or learn something new! Check out JHBG's Facebook page for the rare chance of changes to any event.

Every Saturday, bring your scraps for composting to JH Scraps, 69th St. and 35th Ave., between 10 a.m.–2 p.m. (during the winter between 11 a.m.–1 p.m.).

DECEMBER

Dec. 7 and Dec. 10

JHBG Jackson Height Concert Dates

Dec. 7 at 2 p.m., Lutheran Church of Our Savior, 132 Jefferson Ave., in Mineola.

Dec. 10 at 7:30 p.m., United Methodist Community Church, 81-10 35th Ave., with a reception following in the church library.

Both concerts are free, but there is a suggested donation of \$10 for the general public and \$5 for students and seniors. Each performance will last about an hour and 20 minutes without an intermission.

See the cover of this newsletter for more information.

Tuesday, Dec. 16

Holiday Lighting Ceremony

Jackson Heights Post Office, 37th St., 5 p.m., music and refreshments. This will include both a tree lighting and a menorah lighting. (JHBG could use volunteer help earlier in the day. If you'd like to help out, please write to info@jhb.org, and put "Holiday Volunteer" in the subject line.)

JANUARY

Saturday, Jan. 10 and Sunday, Jan. 11

Mulchfest, Travers Park. 10 a.m.–2 p.m., 78th St. and 34th Ave. Bring your undecorated Christmas tree to Travers Park to be recycled into mulch that you can take with you, or that will nourish plantings across the city. For more information from NYC's Department of Parks & Recreation, do an Internet search on "Mulchfest 2015."

JH SCRAPS is open year-round

* JH SCRAPS is JHBG's composting location. For more info on what is compostable, write to jhscraps@jhb.org.



Travers Park Clean-up



To Compost, or Not to Compost: That is the Question

By Lenny Olsson and Melissa Zavala

In last month's article in *The Views*, we discussed the do's and don'ts of composting. This month we focus on the various benefits of separating food scraps and diverting them from the municipal waste stream. These benefits include cost savings for the city and environmental improvements such as soil enhancement, as well as personal satisfaction.

Waste disposal costs the city more than \$300 million a year, based on previous city budgets. This price is for disposal only and does not include payroll and other expenses associated with sanitation operations. New York City pays several other states, such as Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio, to receive our trash, as well as other out-of-state deindustrialized areas.



The payments are calculated by weight. Based on various waste audits performed in the recent past, approximately one-third of city garbage is compostable. Much of this is food waste. When one takes into account that most fruits are between 70 and 90 percent water (and water is quite heavy in and of itself), removing these items significantly reduces the total weight and therefore the amount paid to other municipalities.

Though many residents are unaware of this, as alluded to above, the city's garbage must be buried somewhere, and with all local landfills now closed, our waste must find another home. With the Fresh Kills landfill closed since 2001, transporting our waste has become increasingly complicated and expensive. States that accept our waste and bury it in their landfills, while satisfying their need for a steady revenue stream, entomb New York City's waste at the expense of their residents' health and property values, negative impacts that are all too familiar to New Yorkers—but especially residents of Staten Island—who have lived in close proximity to landfills now closed throughout the city.

Some of the environmental benefits mentioned above include mediating some of the problems of landfilling, mainly methane production. Organic material buried in airless mounds produce a large amount of methane. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas 20 times more efficient at trapping heat than carbon dioxide. Landfills

are one of the larger contributors of greenhouse gases. Additionally, by reducing the amount of waste to be transported out of state, we would also be reducing the emissions of the vehicles needed to transport it several hundreds of miles.

On a personal level, the knowledge that your efforts can have a positive environmental impact can bring a sense of satisfaction and a connection to natural processes that urban residents would not otherwise experience. While farmers and gardeners are aware of the benefits from the decomposition process, city residents usually lack the need for the organic soil-enhancing material that is finished compost. This can soon change with the implementation of a citywide organic collection project. There is currently a pilot program in several parts of the city, which is scheduled to be completed in July 2015. After a review, decisions will be made regarding a more comprehensive collection system. More specific details await the analysis of this data.

In our next article we will continue discussing benefits of composting at the neighborhood level, such as street-tree health and stormwater management.

This is Lenny and Melissa's second article collaboration. They were bitten by the compost bug almost 10 years ago as volunteers at the St. Mark's Garden Club. They started the compost collection at the Farm Spot CSA, and are NYC Citizen Pruners and Natural Areas Volunteers. They are, along with others, founding members of the JH SCRAPPS compost center. They have lived in Jackson Heights for more than 15 years.

Mulchfest:

Dump your Christmas tree and keep it, too!

You can bring your Christmas tree to 34th Ave. in front of Travers Park on Saturday, Jan. 10 or Sunday, Jan. 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The NYC Department of Parks & Recreation will chip your tree, and give you your very own bag of mulch! Or, if you do not want it, the mulch will be used around the city, perhaps even right here in Jackson Heights.



Please remove all decorations and lights.

If this program is anything like those in the past, there will be refreshments and 34th Ave. will smell like you are deep in some piney woods.

Pet Hazards at the Holidays

By Lila M. Stromer

I had the opportunity to sit with César Tello, DVM, of Noah Ark's Pet Clinic, to discuss some hazards for pets around the holiday season.

Dr. Tello said that a hazard year-round is when owners, meaning well, feed their pets human food. This is particularly true around Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukkah, when yummy foods abound. Hazards include food with bones or ingredients toxic to animals, and fatty foods. The problem is not only with owners giving food to pets, but also with pets stealing food out of the trash or off the table.

The issue with smaller bones, such as with turkey, is that they can be swallowed and become foreign bodies, while larger bones, such as a T-bone from a steak, can become shards when bitten. These bones and shards can cause anything from choking to piercing organs, which requires surgery. The problem with fatty foods, which can range from pulled pork to dessert, is it can cause pancreatitis (more common in dogs), vomiting or diarrhea. Cats and dogs, which are the pets Dr. Tello and I discussed, cannot digest these foods. He recommends not sharing any food, clearing off your table to prevent stealing and making sure your trash is tied up.

At Christmas and Hanukkah, others hazards are ornaments and decorations. Whether you are plugging in a tree or a menorah, a pet might bite the wires. To stop this you can use a deterrent such as bitter apple spray. Breakable decorations can also be a problem. For tree decorations, he recommends putting breakables higher on the tree and plastic or fabric ornaments lower down. For cat owners, breakables on shelves can also be a problem. [*Ed. note:* I find museum putty is a great help; I use it year-round.] Pine trees and decorations can become dangerous if a pet eats the needles, which can irritate the mouth or cause a pet to vomit. The trick is to sweep up loose pine needles right away. I asked him about lilies and poinsettias; he agreed there is a lot of confusion on their toxicity. His advice is to always err on the side of caution, making silk or fabric safer bets.

A hazard he particularly stressed is Xylitol, an artificial sweetener found in many foods, especially low-calorie foods. Without much warning, it will kill dogs. Before giving human food to a pet—which, remember, he recommends never doing—carefully read the ingredient panel for this chemical. If your pet ingests it, call your vet immediately. He also warned about Tylenol, which

will kill a cat very quickly, and ingestion also requires immediate veterinary care.

Foods that are toxic to pets include grapes and raisins (particularly for dogs), and garlic, onion and chocolate (cats and dogs). Given how many recipes call for garlic and onion, it is easy to see why he strongly warns against feeding pets any people food.

Hazards go beyond foods and decorations to household products. For example, toilet bowl products that work every time you flush can burn Fido's or Smokey's tongue if they use the toilet as a water bowl. The safest thing to do is not to use those products, but if you do, leave the toilet cover down to prevent this possibility, and remind guests to do the same. He said that dental floss and thread (particularly attractive to cats) can be quite hazardous, and even deadly, as once ingested it can entwine around organs, requiring delicate surgery. His suggestion is to sew with your pet safely in another room and to throw used dental floss into a covered trash basket. The other product to avoid around the holidays is tinsel, which is unbelievably attractive to cats. If ingested, it creates the same issues as thread and dental floss.

Call your vet immediately whenever you notice any changes in behavior or eating habits, as even a few hours could make the difference in saving a pet's life.

When company arrives he suggests protecting both them and your pet. For example, if your pet is not used to children, do not leave them alone together. Even if the child has a pet at home, your pet has a different personality and temperament. And even if normally calm, all the activities and smells of the holiday season could overly excite or frighten your pet. To prevent any injuries by a stressed animal, monitor your pet for uncommon behavior. If needed, put your pet alone in a quiet room, which will allow him or her to calm down from too much activity. For dogs, a walk might help. He suggests that if snow is on the ground that you use booties, or, if your dog rebels against those, wipe down the paw pads immediately when you get home to wash off any salt. Dr. Tello's secret for easily doing that is baby wipes.

Dr. Tello has other suggestions for keeping pets safe, especially with guests who take medications. For example, a parent may automatically put bedtime pills on a nightstand, which a pet may see as new treats. Medications need to be in kept in bottles; if a pet seems ill and medication is missing, call your vet immediately.

The final thing talked we about is giving pets as gifts. People should get a pet when they *want* one and are ready

for one, and never be given one as a gift. Everyone in the household should want the pet, and not feel as if they are stuck with it. He said that, sadly, many pets received as gifts are given away only one month later. This can be completely avoided by not making such a significant decision for someone else; it is important to remember that every pet is a living creature. A new pet around the holidays is also hard because the new owner may go out of town, there are too many ways to get in trouble (think trees and ornaments) and there is a lot of activity for a new animal to adjust to immediately. Adopting when both a new pet and owner have the best chance of adjustment is ideal for their burgeoning relationship.

When you do decide to adopt a pet for yourself, he stresses adopting from a shelter, not a store or breeder. Another reason not to gift a pet is because it can take several visits to a shelter to see if you and the dog or cat you have your eye on are a good match. If someone says that they want a pet, a better gift would be to give money toward the adoption fee. The adoption will



hopefully lead to a long-term relationship of 10 or more years, which is why that decision should not be made lightly or by someone else.

By adopting from a shelter, you free up space for that shelter to take in another animal. While

most shelters do very good work, Dr. Tello explained that even no-kill shelters may euthanize animals depending on their policies, such as healthcare policies that you may not agree with. If you need to give your pet to a shelter, do your homework and know under what conditions, if any, this may happen. Once a shelter takes your animal, you no longer have any say in the care or decisions made regarding your former pet. Knowing a shelter's policies before you give your pet to it is the best way to ensure the animal's chances of finding a new home. Should you need to give away your pet, the safest thing to do is to find a new, trusted owner yourself. If that is not possible, do research on a few shelters before selecting one. This is one reason why adopting a pet needs considered and responsible decision making.

Dr. Tello offered some useful websites that may help answer questions throughout the year. These include the ASPCA Poison Hotline, and the veterinary websites of Tufts University, University of Pennsylvania (UPenn) and his alma mater, Cornell University. These are all found easily through an Internet search.

To end on an upbeat note, pets offer tremendous love, laughter and friendship. Thank your furry friend by buying a special pet treat or new toy, and keeping them safe throughout the holiday season.

Noah's Ark Pet Clinic is located at 85-05 37th Ave. Dr. Tello is a long-time resident of Jackson Heights, and has been in practice since 1997. He started Noah's Ark in 2000.

Daffodils from Daisies

By Evie McKenna

You will have some Daisies to thank next spring when bouquets of yellow daffodils brighten the Jackson Heights Post Office garden. The planting was done by local Daisy Girl Scout Troops 4315 and 4297 and JHBG on October 12, with dozens of helpers young and old. The sign they're holding in the photo below proudly announces that the troops were lending a hand to improve the JH community. The girls were enthusiastic gardeners with their gloves and trowels as they planted the bulbs for these future flowers; and for some girls, this was their first opportunity to ever plant in soil. Fall color was added by planting chrysanthemums to this heavily trafficked area. The girls were supervised by their troop leaders, and JHBG gardeners Elsa Gurke, Surekha Ammon-Rao and Evie McKenna.



*Brownie Troops
4315 and 4297*

Evie is a Master Composter certified by the Queens Botanical Garden; she also has a Masters in Photography from NYU and currently teaches at SVA. She is a 15-year resident of Jackson Heights, and her primary interests are environmental and civil rights aspects of improving the local community. Past interests led to her work with JH SCRAPS, JHBG's community composting site, and with JHBG's Green Agenda, which, with garden volunteers, nurtures JH's public green spaces and street trees. She is also involved with Garden School, JHBG's independent school.

Pictorial Year in Review: Some of What JHBG Has Accomplished in 2014



Mulch Delivery and Some Volunteers: Clean Up of Diversity Plaza



Tending a Garden



Mulching



Cleaning Up Travers Park



Tree Giveaway





Removing Bricks



Creating Tree Guards



New Tree Guards



Cleaning Up Leaves: 69th and 34th



Student Art Competition



Tree Pit Work: Before, During and After



Planting at PS 280



Compost Care at JH SCRAPS



Having fun!



Summer Concerts





VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

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JHBG Gets It Done!

Greenmarket
Halloween Parade
JH SCRAPS Compost Center
Landmark Advocacy
Tree LC
Holiday Lighting Ceremony
Historic Weekend Tours
Summer Sundays in the Park Concerts
Green Agenda for Jackson Heights
JH CREW dog park
Friends of Travers Park
78th Street Plaza & Garden
Garden School Athletic Field Purchase
69th Street Green Zone
Candidate & Issue Town Hall Meetings
Landing Lights Ball Field Restoration
Make Music New York
Jackson Heights Orchestra
Graffiti Removal
Garden Club
Community Awards
Views from the Heights newsletter
Jackson Heights Art Contest
Local history books -
Jackson Heights:
A Garden in the City,
Jackson Heights:
From Ice Age to Space Age



**Jackson Heights
Beautification Group**
Founded in 1988
www.jhb.org
info@jhb.org

Membership Form for Jackson Heights Beautification Group

Your annual donation/membership in JHBG helps us fund neighborhood activities, demonstrates your commitment to a better community and permits us to be your voice in the revitalization of Jackson Heights. Your support is important to the future of our neighborhood. JHBG is 100 percent volunteer-run; there is no paid staff. JHBG is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, and your contribution is tax deductible.

Please make checks payable to: Jackson Heights Beautification Group.

You will be mailed a receipt for tax purposes.

Please fill out this page and return it with your payment to:

JHBG — Membership
Box 720253
Jackson Heights, NY 11372

1. Please circle membership level

Individual—\$25

Business—\$50

Sustaining—\$100

Patron—\$250

Benefactor—\$500

Sponsor—\$1,000

Other _____

2. Please print the following:

Name: _____

Address (include apt. #): _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Optional: Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

3. Are you interested in being contacted about any of the following JHBG activities? If so, please circle the appropriate one(s).

Clean street

Friends of Travis Park

Garden Club (including flower planting)

Graffiti Busters

Halloween Parade

Newsletter and/or Website

Town Halls

Membership Building

Historic Weekend

Other: _____

4. Suggestions or Comments:

THANK YOU! If you have any questions or concerns, contact JHBG at 718-565-5344 or at info@jhbg.org.



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VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

JHBM HOLIDAY LIGHTING !

DECEMBER 16, starting at 5:00 p.m.

In front of the Post Office on 37th Ave.