



Memory

The Newsletter
of Friends of
Straus Park
Winter/2003

The title
“Memory” is
derived from
the name of the
memorial statue
of the weeping
woman reclining
above the
fountain in
Straus Park.

Wife of Great-Great- Great Grandnephew of Isidor Straus Opens Manhattan Restaurant

Lunchbox Food Co.
357 West Street, one block
north of Houston Street
Telephone: 646-230-9466

The new owners of what was once the iconic Terminal Diner are Lawrence Rudolph and Le Bernardin alumna, Jennifer Kohns (wife of Daniel, relative of Isidor Straus). The two new owners have restored the space, and brought in new booths and, more importantly, Chef Shawn Glenn, formerly of Judson Grill and Daniel.

The trio has made the most of the '50s stainless-steel Kullman diner, beautifully refurbishing it and painting the façade chartreuse and chocolate, a reference to the packaging of their sideline—little rosettes and lollipops confections, and brownies, including dark chocolate, white chocolate, and chili-spiced Mexican with a hint of cinnamon. French sea salt on the tables, freshly ground organic beef in Cheddar-bacon burgers, coconut crème fraiche, chicken salad wrapped in a rice flour crêpe,

and well dressed green garnishes are some of the delights. The kitchen cures its own salmon, makes its own doughnuts, and boils and bakes its own bagels of such flavors as orange zest and Parmesan. Sandwiches and French toast are made from Balthazar breads and croissants, and butternut-squash marmalade and meaty strips of bacon are also available.

Starting in January, Lunchbox Food Co. will be open Sunday through Wednesday 8am until 11pm, and Thursday through Saturday, 8am until 2am. Brunch is served on weekends.



October Art in the Park Celebration

Our annual Art in the Park was a creative and successful event, as artists, entertainers, and food gathered under sunny skies. The art exhibition and sale, Fred Astaire Dance Studios' demonstration and instruction, and musical groups, Bota Fogo Quartet,

Letter from the Editor

I would like to thank you, our readers, for your support and participation in making Straus Park a special little place on the Upper West Side.

This past year Friends of Straus Park became an independent tax-exempt organization, our newsletter (*Memory*) is now quarterly, we were awarded a grant of \$10,000 from the City Parks Foundation under a program established by the Mellon Foundation, we held several delightful events in the park, and our literature is soon to be posted on the web site of the West 104th Street Block Association at:

<http://www.bloomingdale.org>.

We invite new people, new ideas, to help create ... well, whatever people might like to see happen in Straus Park and in our newsletter. I would like to hear from anyone who has important and relevant news, or an interesting story to tell. Famous and humble neighbors might like to share stories of their recent triumphs and toils. A Children's Corner could be part of the newsletter, but we need the children and their writings. A horticultural map of Straus Park is planned, and until that time, NYC Parks & Recreation's recently published *New York City Trees* guide can enlighten your stroll.

Remember: We need YOU to help! Tax-deductible membership is important, as well. Please keep in touch!

We wish all our Friends of Straus Park a very happy and healthy 2003!

Margaret G. Kavanau

Café Con Leche, and The Nubian Gents, provided a delightful ambience throughout the day.

Joe Arbo is stepping down from his many years' position as "Vendor Chief" for this event. We are looking for someone to take over this important job, which involves making contact with previous vendors and finding others who want to set up a booth at our Art in the Park. If you are interested, please contact us.



Some Creative Ways to Raise Funds for Straus Park

By Deirdre Wulf

Treasurer, Friends of Straus Park

Straus Park is maintained in the beautiful condition that most of us now enjoy through financial support from you, our friends and neighbors. Some of you have found a number of innovative ways to provide—and increase—your contributions. These include:

- *Matching funds from employers.* Some of you may work for companies that match charitable giving by their employees. If you work for such a corporation, you should be able to obtain a matching grant application form from your personnel officer. You should then attach this form to whatever donation you choose to make to Friends of Straus Park. We will then fill it out and send it to the office that processes and approves matching grants. Within a couple of weeks we should receive a donation from your employer equal to the size of your own contribution.

- The management board of an apartment building near Straus Park

also participates in a matching grant arrangement. For every dollar donated to Friends of Straus Park by a tenant or owner, the board gives us a matching dollar. If you live in an apartment house with a similar management structure, inquire whether your board might agree to duplicate this system.

- Last Spring, a neighbor on Riverside Drive contacted the superintendent of his building to propose that bicycles left in the basement—and not collected or identified for a number of years—might be sold, with the proceeds going to Friends of Straus Park. The superintendent agreed, after checking that none of the bikes had owners, and our neighbor was able to sell them on the street at our Spring anniversary party in the park and give the proceeds to Friends of Straus Park. Why don't you investigate whether your building also has discarded bikes in the basement that the superintendent would probably like to see removed?

- You might encourage your kids to collect pennies, nickels and quarters, which can then be packaged into rolls and taken to your local bank, who will give them dollar bills in exchange. Many of the Christmas and Hannukah catalogues feature attractive little machines that count and roll pennies thrown into them at the end of each day. This might be a fun gift that could also teach your kids about Straus Park and the funds and community support required to maintain it.

If any readers have additional suggestions about how to raise funds for Straus Park, we would very much like to hear from you.



Escalation of Owner/Occupancy Evictions

New York City's Rent Stabilization Law permits landlords to recover any rent stabilized apartment—regardless of how long a tenant has lived there—if the landlord or a member of the landlord's immediate family wants to use or occupy it. A landlord is not required to show compelling need for the apartment and can obtain an apartment even when there are other vacant units in the building. The number of apartments in a single building that a landlord can recover on owner occupancy grounds is unlimited.

Owner-occupancy evictions throughout the City of New York have reached alarming levels. Particularly vulnerable to this type of eviction are tenants in townhouse and brownstone apartment buildings, many of which are being emptied in their entirety by landlords intent on converting multiple-family structures into single-family dwellings. This summer *The New York Times* published an article about a building on East 72nd Street where the landlord is seeking to recover 23 apartments on owner-occupancy grounds. Apartment dwellers near Straus Park are also being affected.

It is virtually impossible for tenants to win such cases, which often entail lengthy and costly litigation. The few protections tenants had left against the abusive application of this law have been seriously eroded by recent court decisions.

A tenant coalition has been formed to try to do something about this issue, which is wrenching people from their homes, depleting the affordable housing stock and seriously eroding the quality of life of many New Yorkers. On their agenda is the mobilization of tenants and tenant groups, political

lobbying, and a class action lawsuit. If you would like more information or to help strengthen the laws regarding owner-occupancy evictions, please contact Peter Armstrong at ptrarm@aol.com or (212) 691-7848.



A Series of Community Forums Planned By Friends of Straus Park

By Leon Auerbach

Our neighborhood now has a group of new local leaders in the Police, Parks, Sanitation and Fire Departments. To introduce these new leaders to the neighborhood folks, the local branches of the uniformed services will present a series of Community Forums, organized by Friends of Straus Park.

The leaders will use these meetings to talk about some past history and describe their plans for the future. They will also describe the kind of citizen participation they would like from us. The audience will have an opportunity to speak directly and ask questions of these local government representatives.

Inspector James Dean, the new Commander of the NYPD 24th Precinct, will be at the first Forum, to be held on Wednesday, February 26, 2003 at 7:00pm – 8:30pm in the lobby of 340 Riverside Drive (at 106th Street).

Subsequent Forums will be as follows:

- Manhattan Commissioner William Castro of Parks & Recreation in early April
- Supervisor Mike McDonnell of the Department of Sanitation in early June

- Captain John Pellegrinelli of the NYC Fire Department in August

The Forums will be held in a variety of building lobbies in the area. Look for posters that announce dates and locations.



News!

In a recent communication from the Straus Historical Society, Inc., it was reported that "... a DNA test proved that the family of Moises Lazarus is related to the Lazarus Straus family." Joan Adler, Executive Director, said it took decades until modern technology could validate this family connection.



Welcome! Commanding Officer Inspector James Dean

James Dean has been the new Commanding Officer at our 24th Precinct since late 2002. James Dean was born and raised in New

York City. He graduated from Fairfield University, Connecticut, and went on to earn his Master of Arts degree in Criminal Justice at John Jay College. From 1992 to 1999, Commander Dean worked for the NYC Narcotics Division as Lieutenant and Captain, in Manhattan and the Bronx. From early 1999, he worked as Deputy Inspector of the Auto Crime Division of the Organized Crime Control Bureau.

Commander Dean expressed concern about Straus Park. He is well aware of our struggles to keep it safe and clean. Quality of life issues are ongoing concerns and continue to be a subject for discussion between our Mayor and the Police Commissioner. The 24th Precinct is committed to helping our neighborhood, which includes 106th to 110th Streets along Broadway and, of course, Straus Park.

Until a new Quality of Life "311" hotline is put into effect, continue to contact the 24th Precinct if you notice any trouble in Straus Park. The 24th Precinct's telephone number is 678-1811.



FRIENDS OF STRAUS PARK, INC.

Join and Participate:

Please fill out the coupon below and let us hear from you. You can indicate on the bottom of the coupon how you might help us to maintain Straus Park. Mail the coupon to: Friends of Straus Park, Inc., Cathedral Station, P. O. Box 2021, New York, NY 10025.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Tel: (optional) _____ E-Mail (optional) _____

Margaret G. Kavanau, Editor
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Jo Abrams, President
Kate Ford, Vice President
Deirdre Wulf, Treasurer
Margaret G. Kavanau, Secretary

For any serious concerns:
Emergencies dial 911

24th Police Precinct
Community Patrol Officers
(212) 678-1945

General Precinct matters
(212) 678-1811

Parks and Recreation (212) 360-8111

Calendar of Events

April 12, 2003 (rain date: April 13)
Brunch in Straus Park
Music and light food.

May 8, 2003
Benefit Concert for Straus Park
Indoor evening event, music and food.

June 11, 2003 (rain date: June 12)
Evening of Music in Straus Park

October 18, 2003 (rain date: October 19)
Art in the Park
A Day-Long Celebration of Art, Dance, Music & Food



FRIENDS OF STRAUS PARK, INC.
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New York, NY 10025

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