

Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc.

PANYC

NEWSLETTER

No. 142

January 2010

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Next Meeting:

March 10, 2010
Neighborhood Preservation Center
232 East 11th Street
New York, NY
6:30pm

Newsletter Editor:

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PANYC GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
September 23, 2009, 6:30 P.M.
Neighborhood Preservation Center (NPC)
232 East 11th Street, New York, NY

Present: Geismar, Rothschild, Wall, Cantwell, Spritzer, Pickman, Stone, Rakos, Linn, MacLean

Treasurer's Report

Spritzer reported there is \$3,650 in the treasury. There are 46 paid members, 8 delinquent, and three newsletter-only subscriptions.

President's Report

- a) Admiral's Row development, Brooklyn Navy Yard, continues to be a fiasco. Navy Yard issued an RFP from interested developers but has failed to disclose the sites of archaeological sensitivity / significance identified in the Sec 1A report. Recommendation made that a letter be included in the next Newsletter reporting on the collapsed building.
- b) Email response to Geismar's June 25, 2009 letter with comments on CEQR manual revisions received from Katie Kendall, EDC. Letter was not printed in last newsletter, but will be included in next. Kendall thanks Geismar and PANYC for the letter.
- c) Geismar sent a letter sent to the OP ED EDITOR of the New York Times in response to the interview with Jack Fortmeyer, retired Brooklyn Firefighter and bottle collector (One in 8 Million, NY Times, July 9, 2009). No response from the Times. Letter can be found on the NYAC website:
<http://nyarchaeology.org/mainpages/PANYC/lettertoNYTimes14July2009.htm>
- d) Injunction filed and won by the tenants of The Riverside Houses in Brooklyn Heights against the construction of subterranean parking garage. The State Division of Housing & Community Renewal ruled that the proposed green roof on top of the 100-car underground garage would not adequately replace the courtyard (and the trees saved during the 1950 construction of the BQE) and thus return proper building services to its tenants. A pdf of the decision can be found at:
<http://brooklynheightsblog.com/archives/11515/riverside-apts-order-jul-14-2009>
- e) Geismar sent a letter of introduction to Frank Vagnone, new Executive Director of the Historic House Trust, advocating for renewed attention to archaeology at Trust properties. After meeting with Geismar and Linn, Vagnone responded with a proposal for a consortium of archaeology professors to serve as advisory committee and explore the possibility of developing field school projects for area students as a way of circumventing the lack of funds to address archaeology at Trust properties. Linn circulated his request soliciting interested parties via email. Wall, Rothschild, Gilbert, and Linn met with Vagnone and reported back on Vagnone's continued interest in establishing an archaeological advisory committee. Rakos suggested PANYC should advise the House Trust develop a cultural resources management plan for their properties that would include archaeology.

Committee Reports (only those making a report are mentioned)

Events:

- 1) Geismar's Weeksville walking-tour (NYSA-Met Chapter) has been postponed until further notice.
- 2) Wall & Cantwell will be giving a talk "Digging New Netherland" at 1:30 pm on November 14, 2009 at the New Amsterdam History Center as part of *5 Dutch Days, 5 Boroughs*. See http://www.5dutchdaysnyc.org/calendar_fri.html for details.
- 3) South Street Seaport's exhibit *New Amsterdam: The Island at the Center of the World* runs through January 3, 2010.

Landmarks: Amanda Sutphin would like to meet and discuss putting archaeology reports online. Stone suggested Landmarks control access through a password applied for through Landmarks. Geismar raised concern with reports containing sensitive materials such as burial locations. MacLean proposed that Landmark research the protocol other city archaeology offices—Philadelphia or Boston—for precedent. Rothschild, Stone and Geismar will meet with Sutphin on issue.

Membership: Question raised again how to increase meeting participation.

Newsletter: Thanks go to Chris Ricciardi for his ongoing efforts in producing the PANYC newsletter. Ricciardi has also taken on the task of digitizing the PANYC archive and past newsletters. Question arose about the publishing of digitized newsletters to retain the value of paid membership. Decision made to wait for 5 meetings to cycle them on to the website—one year behind.

NYAC:

- 1) Next meeting October 3rd on Peebles Island in Albany. Afternoon program topic will be how to complete National Register Nomination Forms.
- 2) By-law revisions continue. Copies of by-laws were sent to members by U.S. mail and digitally to the to the list serve.

Parks: Geismar reported that Phase 2 work at Washing Square Park is beginning. There is also a redesigning of the bike paths underway in Battery Park in potentially sensitive areas of the park.

Public Program: Linn soliciting ideas for next program, please contact her with suggestions.

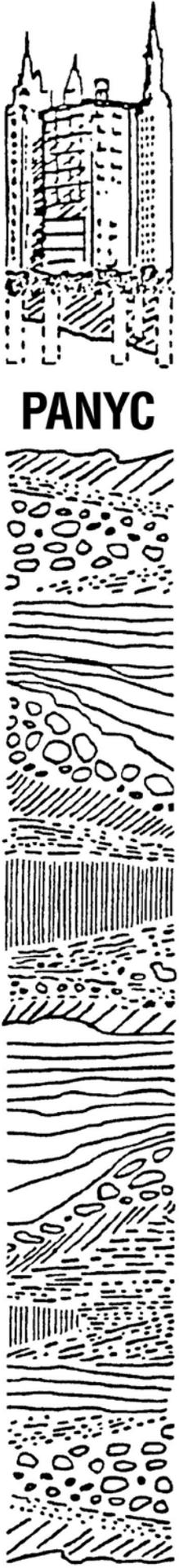
Repository: Parks still interested and has located building at Fort Totten. Occupancy request is currently being negotiated. Needs funding.

Website: Pickman reported that the committee has met and has original website designed by Ricciardi on disk. Efforts to update the site are currently underway. To date there will be six sections/content headers: History of NYC Archaeology, History of PANYC, Issues, Membership Information, Events, and Links. A newsletter/archive section will be added when the scanned material is received from Ricciardi. They have a half-dozen potential host sites identified and are in the process of narrowing down the list. A follow-up meeting is planned to discuss content.

New Business

- a) Wednesday, November 18, 2009 is the date of our next meeting.
- b) MacLean shared that the New York Public Library's *Mapping NYC* has gone live using Google Earth as its interface. The digitized NYC map collections now includes more than 2000 maps from 32 titles, organized chronologically and geographically (by borough), all published between 1852 and 1923. The map index does require installation of Google Earth on your computer. The site can be found at: <http://www.nypl.org/blogs/2009/02/26/mapping-nyc>

Meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM
Respectfully submitted by Jessica S. MacLean



Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc.

December 26, 2009

The Honorable Robert Tierney, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street -9N
New York, NY 10038

Re: December 22, 2009 Meeting

Dear Bob:

On behalf of Professional Archaeologists of New York City (PANYC), I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me last Tuesday. I am only sorry that Meredith Linn, our Vice President, was unable to attend, but I am sure you will meet in the not too distant future.

I would like to reiterate that PANYC is most grateful for your continuing support of New York City archaeology and for the time and effort you and Amanda Sutphin, the agency's Director of Archaeology, and Kate Daly, the Executive Director, have devoted to the issue of a suitable artifact repository in the city. As you suggested, I intend to contact the New York Historical Society and the Brooklyn Historical Society to determine if either institution could provide an umbrella for such a repository, especially since you so generously offered to lend the agency's support to such an endeavor.

Finally, I hope you can empathize with my passion to address archaeology in landmarked districts. Clearly, it is an issue that requires a measured response, but one that needs to be addressed. I am confident that with your guidance it is an issue that can be handled to the benefit of irreplaceable archaeological resources in compliance with the Landmarks Law. I do hope PANYC will be part of a continuing dialogue in this matter. We would gladly provide any input deemed appropriate.

My best wishes for the New Year and my very best regards,



Joan H. Geismar, Ph.D.
PANYC President

cc: A. Sutphin, Director of Archaeology, NYCLPC
Lisa Kersavage, Director of Advocacy and Policy, MAS

**ANNOUNCEMENTS
2010 BERT SALWEN AWARD
FOR THE BEST STUDENT PAPER ON NEW YORK CITY
ARCHAEOLOGY**

A prize of \$100.00 will be awarded by Professional Archaeologists of New York City (PANYC) to the author of the best paper on New York City archaeology written by a student in fulfillment of an academic requirement. Although preference may be given to papers written using materials from contract archaeology projects in the city, the competition is not limited to such research. Both graduate and undergraduate students are urged to apply. Papers should not be longer than 50 pages. The deadline for submission is March 15, 2010. Please either email the manuscript to acantwel@andromeda.rutgers.edu or else mail three copies of the manuscript to Anne-Marie Cantwell, PANYC Awards Committee, Apt. 5C, 14 Stuyvesant Oval, New York, New York 10009. The Bert Salwen Award will be presented at the annual PANYC Public Program at the Museum of the City of New York on April 24, 2010.

**NOMINATIONS REQUESTED FOR
SPECIAL PANYC AWARD
FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY A NON
ARCHAEOLOGIST TO
NEW YORK CITY ARCHAEOLOGY**

PANYC (Professional Archaeologists of New York City) is pleased to request nominations for a special award honoring non archaeologists or institutions who have made outstanding contributions to the furtherance of New York City archaeology. Please email your nomination to acantwel@andromeda.rutgers.edu or mail three copies of your letter documenting the nominee's qualifications to Anne-Marie Cantwell, PANYC Awards Committee Chair, Apt. 5C, 14 Stuyvesant Oval, New York, New York, 10009. Nominations must be received by March 15, 2010. The award will be presented at the PANYC Public Program at the Museum of the City of New York on April 24, 2010.

Recent Losses to the field:

John Cavallo

John Cavallo, an esteemed colleague, passed away on December 25, 2009. It was a loss to all but especially to those who knew him and worked with him over the years. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family. A memorial will be held on January 23, 2010, from 2pm to 5pm at Wilson Auditorium, Monmouth University, Long Branch, NJ. An obituary can be found at <http://www.racctz.org/orbituary.html>

Jeffrey Harbison

(Excerpted from the Obituary by Bonnie L. Cook, Inquirer Staff Writer – originally printed in the Philadelphia Inquirer)

Jeffrey D. Harbison, 39, a principal archaeologist for URS Corp., died Nov. 17 in a work-related boating accident in Glens Falls, N.Y. Mr. Harbison was in a small watercraft surveying in advance of a General Electric dredging project next year on the upper Hudson River near Thompson Island. He was headed ashore with another URS employee when the boat's engine failed, setting it adrift, according to Warren County Coroner, Timothy Murphy. The craft went over a small dam and capsized, trapping Mr. Harbison in a current. Though an experienced swimmer and wearing a life vest, Mr. Harbison spent too long in the 38-degree water, Murphy said. He died that night of heart arrhythmia and hypothermia at Glens Falls Hospital. Mr. Harbison met his wife, Jennifer Marston, while working at URS. They married in 2003. He is survived by his wife, son and daughter among others.



December 21, 2009, 12:06 pm

Builders Unearth a Mystery in Times Square

By [PATRICK MCGEEHAN](#)



Ruth Fremson/The New York Times A stone wall was uncovered at a construction site on West 41st Street, between Seventh and Eighth Avenues.

Midtown Manhattan has been overhauled so thoroughly in the last two decades that any structure not made of glass and steel looks old. In that realm, the tightly packed pile of stones that appeared at the base of [11 Times Square](#) last week looked positively ancient.

Its sudden unveiling caused passers-by and neighbors to wonder how old it was and what purpose it had served.

Was it a furnace? A fireplace? A coal vault?

Inquiring minds — some belonging to reporters and editors at The New York Times whose desks practically overlooked it — demanded answers. The possibility of news happening mere feet away was both tantalizing and unusually convenient.

Who better to ask than the men in hardhats milling around the taped-off hole that contained the thing in question? Who better to express extreme disinterest in helping a reporter than those same men in hardhats?

According to them, it was part of something that was there before they built the nearly complete office tower at the corner of 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue.

Helpful.

Time to call in an expert. Breaking away from holiday shopping, Joan H. Geismar rushes to the scene, as only a dedicated urban archaeologist would.

Upon hearing a rough description of this remnant, Dr. Geismar, president of the [Professional Archaeologists of New York City](#), had guessed it was a vault that held coal to heat a long-gone building. But upon further review, Dr. Geismar was less certain.

“This isn’t typical,” she said, after leaning over the edge of the street to inspect the stones.

Normally, a coal vault would be made of bricks and open at the top. But this wall of stacked stone had a rectangular opening at the bottom that made it resemble a fireplace. She speculated that it could have been the foundation of a structure built in the 19th century and that the opening had been cut in more modern times to accommodate utility lines.

When Doug Allen, the executive overseeing construction of the tower for its developer, [SJP Properties](#), arrived on the block, Dr. Geismar quizzed him. Mr. Allen revealed little of what he knew, but he said the workers planned to leave the stones in place and fill the space around them.

That cover-up plan (literally) pleased Dr. Geismar, who researched the history of the property and found that it had housed a theater built in the early 1890s and a row of three- and four-story buildings that stood into the 1910s.

She imagined aloud how thrilling it would be for future historians and archaeologists to stumble upon the stones again in 100 years when the lot is redeveloped.

“It makes perfect sense to leave it,” Dr. Geismar said. “It’s sort of a little secret of New York’s past.”

TENEMENT MUSEUM



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2010

We're so happy to announce that "Rear Yard at 97 Orchard Street" is open to the public.

The recreated yard depicts early tenement life in New York. You can see it from Allen Street or learn more about the importance of the space in the lives of working-class New Yorkers by taking *The Moores: An Irish Family in America* tour, which is offered daily.





On a funny note, most of this laundry was blown off the line a few weeks ago when the weather was bad. Some long-john style underpants were blown over the fence and subsequently disappeared - hope someone found them who needs them in this cold weather. While we figure out how to better secure the clothing, it's been temporarily removed from the lines. All this serves as a reminder that 19th and early 20th century homemakers had to wash and dry laundry no matter what the weather - in the rain, snow, and wind.

For more photos see:

<http://tenement-museum.blogspot.com/2010/01/photos-from-finished-rear-yard-exhibit.html>

<u>Event</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contacts</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Exhibition at the NYHS: "Dutch New York between East and West."	The World of Margrieta Van Varick Celebrating Dutch achievement using maps and books from the Map Division			through Jan. 24	Bard Graduate Center, 18 W86th St.	http://www.bgc.bard.edu/gallery/gallery-at-bgc/main-gallery.html	free with New York Historical Society membership
Exhibition at the NYPL: "Mapping New York's Shoreline"				now through June 26 th	New York Public Library, 42 nd St. and Fifth Ave.		free
Graduate Center Events: "The Row House Reborn"	Architecture and Neighborhoods in new York City, 1908-1929	Architectural Historian Andrew Dolkart (Columbia)	6:30pm	March 10, 2010	The Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Ave	Gotham Center for New York City History 212-817-8215	free
Graduate Center Events: "David Ruggles: A Radical Black Abolitionist and the Underground Railroad in New York City"	A discussion of a new biography of David Ruggles (1810-1849)	Graham Russell Gao Hodges	6:30pm	April 13, 2010	The Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Ave	Gotham Center for New York City History 212-817-8215	free
Exhibition: "Ships, Explorers and the World Trade Center"	400 Years of Lower Manhattan Memories at India House			February 2010	India House, Inc. 1 Hanover Square	info@indiahousefoundation.org or Maria Dering 212-873-6715	fundraiser on Feb 3, suggested donation of \$10 otherwise

MEMBERSHIP/NEWSLETTER/INFORMATION:

If you are interested in joining PANYC or if you would like to subscribe to the PANYC Newsletter, please complete the form below and return it to:

Mark A. Smith
92 Main Street - Suite 207
Yonkers, New York 10701

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE: _____

ZIP (+FOUR): _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Please indicate preferred mailing address and check below as appropriate.

I wish to apply for membership to PANYC and would like to receive the application form _____

I wish to subscribe to the PANYC Newsletter (Fee \$10) _____

I wish to make an additional donation to PANYC _____

I wish to receive the PANYC Newsletter in digital (e-format) _____

I wish to receive the PANYC Newsletter in printed (mailed) form _____

If you have any questions please email: panyc2006@yahoo.com