

**Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc.**

**PANYC**

# **NEWSLETTER**

Number 96, May 2000

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**NOTICE OF NEXT MEETING: May 17, 2000**

Hunter College North, the intersection of East 68<sup>th</sup> and Lexington, Manhattan; Room 710  
Turn right out of the elevator, go through the doors, turn left and go to end of hall, the room is on the right.  
Executive Board: 6:00 P.M.  
General Membership: 6:30 P.M.

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Minutes of the PANYC General Membership Meeting: March 15, 2000

President Dallal called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** The minutes of the last General Membership meeting were accepted with the following corrections: Under ACTION COMMITTEE: Spritzer's named was spelled incorrectly. Under URBAN STANDARDS COMMITTEE: It was unclear what this statement references as Harris was not waiting for the NYAC standards.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Stone reported \$1558.73 in the PANYC treasury as of 10 March.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** President Dallal indicated that a public meeting regarding the designation of the Lower East Side Historic District had been held. A letter Geismar wrote for Dallal's signature was presented at the meeting on behalf of PANYC. The letter was to Commissioner Bernadette Castro of New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and indicates PANYC's concerns that archeology be included in the designation. Dallal spoke with Bob Kuhn (NYSOPRHP) who noted that the designation review period has been extended as per a request by Landmarks. New York State prepared the nomination.

City Hall Park was discussed. Parsons scope of work for artifact processing and conservation presented is acceptable to Landmarks. Its not clear what Landmark's budget may be to process this large collection of material. The artifacts have apparently not been touched since they were unearthed. Dallal wrote a letter expressing PANYC's concerns for the artifacts.

There is an on-line article about City Hall in Archaeology Magazine:  
[www.archaeology.org/online/features/cityhall](http://www.archaeology.org/online/features/cityhall)

Liberty Island. This work is not a Section 106 project. PANYC's concerns regarding the use of volunteers was addressed by the National Park Service. While they will use volunteers, they will be supervised by qualified archaeologists. Two more archaeologists are needed for the field. Work is scheduled to begin May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Dallal requested that Geismar introduce Stephen Lee, one of two law students (the other is Ms. Jacqui Rubin), who worked to obtain PANYC's incorporation and are working towards obtaining our non-profit status. Lee indicated that PANYC has been incorporated since January 18, 2000. This meeting, on 3/15/00, was our first meeting as the Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc. We do not have to use "Inc." after the abbreviation, PANYC. He provided several hand-outs regarding legal and tax considerations for non-profits. These shall appear in the next Newsletter. PANYC's by-laws have changed slightly but should not impact PANYC's operating procedure. The lawyers simply clarified procedures that were already in the by-laws. Mr. Lee was thanked by all for the hard work that he and

Ms. Rubin put into PANYC this year. Geismar announced that the Certificate of Incorporation will be going into our archives. She also noted that Freeman attended meetings with her and the lawyers regarding the non-profit and incorporation status.

**ACTION:** Spritzer distributed NYSOPRHP forms for registering prehistoric and historic archaeological sites in New York State.

**AWARDS:** Dallal reported for Cantwell that a nomination had been received for the student award and a nomination was received for the special award.

**CITY HALL PARK:** City Hall Park was discussed under President's Report, above. Gary McGowan indicated there are numerous artifacts that required conservation.

**ELECTION:** The new officers are as follows: President, Geismar; Vice President, Bonasera; Secretary, Stone; Treasurer, Freeman. The new board members are as follows: Fitts, Rakos, Cantwell, Pickman and Yamin

**EVENTS:** The PANYC program was omitted for the Events calendar due to an oversight.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Gary McGowan's application for membership was accepted unanimously. He was welcomed by all as a new member.

**NYAC:** Harris reported that the NYAC February meeting was held on-line and was successful. Stone concurred. Nina Versaggi has prepared a guidebook that interprets NY State guidelines for cultural resources. The draft is currently under review by various state agencies. The guidebook will be available to local communities, developers, etc. to assist them in understanding the process.

**PUBLIC PROGRAM:** Geismar informed the meeting that the Public Program is set for April 16<sup>th</sup> from 1 – 3 PM and the speakers will be Ralph Solecki, Diana Wall, Becky Yamin, Chris Ricciardi and possibly, Diane Dallal. She passed out a copy of the program announcement.

A motion was introduced by Freeman regarding the program announcement for next year. She suggested that the speakers and their affiliation be included on the flyer. A discussion ensued. The motion was tabled until next year.

**STONE STREET:** Dallal read a statement provided to her by Ricciardi. He said that the monitoring work by Tracker Archaeological Consultants and URS/Greiner was completed. No significant cultural remains were encountered. He also noted that based on previous work this field effort should not have been undertaken as research indicated significant disturbance from utility installation activities. Harris noted that the New York SHPO recommended this work be undertaken. The committee will review the files to see what NY SHPO recommended. Further discussion ensued regarding monitoring and the Stone Street Project.

**URBAN STANDARDS:** The Monitoring Report is in preparation. The draft appeared in both the PANYC and NYAC Newsletters and Harris reported that this yielded quite a few comments. The NYSHPO commented and provided several proposals for monitoring that were followed and yielded quality results. NJHPO comments are forthcoming.

**WEBSITE:** Dallal read a statement prepared by Ricciardi. He indicated that we need to include a point-

of-contact on the website so that readers have someone to contact for further information. Pickman suggested that we might be able to have a PANYC e-mail address as opposed to using an individual's account. Someone would be assigned to read and respond to any in-coming e-mail. This could possibly be a rotating assignment to PANYC members. The idea was considered acceptable.

Ricciardi also reported that he updated the PANYC website and would like feedback. The address is <http://home.att.net/~Ricciardi/>.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** Dallal passed on the Presidency of PANYC to in-coming President Joan Geismar. Geismar thanked Dallal on behalf of PANYC and remarked on what a marvelously active President Dallal had been. Dallal was thanked by all for her hard work and commitment.

Stone moved to adjourn the meeting and Pickman seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 7:50.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lynn Rakos, for Mike Bonasera, PANYC Secretary.

PROFESSIONAL ARCHAEOLOGISTS OF NEW YORK CITY

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Ms. Ronda Wist  
Executive Director  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission  
100 Old Slip  
New York, NY 10005

March 13, 2000

Dear Ms. Wist,

PANYC was pleased to learn that an analysis of the artifacts and a final report summarizing the results of the City Hall Park archaeological excavations would be undertaken. Your letter of November 17, 1999 also mentioned that the artifacts from the City Hall Park site were "being stored in a facility which meets Federal standards for the temporary curation and storage of archaeological materials." From this statement, we assumed that the artifacts were being stored in a secure, climate-controlled facility.

However, it is now March and according to 36 CFR Part 79:7, "providing curatorial services means managing and preserving a collection according to professional museum and archival practices" which minimally includes "cleaning, stabilizing and conserving a collection in such a manner to preserve it." To date, it is our understanding that not even minimal artifact processing, i.e. washing, drying, etc. has been initiated since October 1999.

We also wish to point out that a storage facility (the macro-environment) can be climate-controlled but have little impact on the microenvironment within each individual, sealed, plastic bag of unprocessed artifacts. A strong possibility exists, therefore, that these microenvironments will lead to further deterioration of organic materials such as bone, shell, wood, seeds and leather. Even metals might be seriously affected. During fieldwork, for example, much of the metal showed evidence of rampant bronze disease. Although it was PANYC's understanding that the least-stable artifacts from the City Hall Park site would be sent to a conservator, to date this has not taken place.

We understand that a scope of work has not yet been approved, that funding has not yet been allocated, that Parsons cannot be expected to process the artifacts without funding and that the City has the right to expect a research design that does justice to the significance of the site and its resources. However, PANYC wonders how long the

artifacts will remain unprocessed before each piece falls into place? We respectfully urge you to do everything in your power to facilitate funding towards completion of this important historic project.

Sincerely,



Diane Dallal  
PANYC President  
South Street Seaport Museum  
17 State Street  
NY 10004

cc: Honorable Jennifer Raab, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Honorable Rudy Washington, Deputy Mayor City of New York  
Mr. George Zellonakis, Department of Parks and Recreation  
Dr. Peter Glumacs, Principal Investigator, Parsons Engineering  
Dr. Arthur Bankoff, Archaeologist, NYCLPC  
Dr. Robert Kuhn, SHPO



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

100 Old Slip New York NY 10005 TEL: 212-487-6820 FAX: 212-487-6796 TTY: 212-487-6745  
<http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/lpc/>



RONDA WIST  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 27, 2000

Diane Dallal  
PANYC President  
South Street Seaport Museum  
17 State Street  
New York, NY 10004

Dear Ms. Dallal:

I wanted to acknowledge receipt of your letter of March 13 concerning the archeological artifacts excavated from City Hall Park.

As you know from Arthur Bankoff and Amanda Sutphin, we are working on this issue. I will respond to you more fully in the near future.

Thank you for your concern.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronda Wist".

Ronda Wist



## The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

100 Old Slip New York NY 10005 TEL: 212-487-6844 FAX: 212-487-6839 TTY: 212-487-6745  
<http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/lpc/>



April 13, 2000

Diane Dallal, President  
PANYC  
c/o South Street Seaport Museum  
17 State Street  
New York, NY 10004

Dear Ms. Dallal:

We are writing in response to your letter of March 13 regarding the City Hall Park project.

We had expected that the analysis of the archaeological collection (other than human remains) would have been underway at this point. However, since we are committed to ensuring that the scope of work is of high quality, we have required numerous revisions to the document. We continue to work towards an acceptable proposal and have requested that Dr. Petar Glumac submit his final scope of work this week. As soon as we approve the proposal, the Department of Parks and Recreation will begin its process with Dr. Glumac.

Dr. Glumac reports that the collection does not require immediate conservation, but notes that the artifacts stored at Parsons must ultimately be conserved and stabilized.

As you know, the human remains are being curated and analyzed under the supervision of Dr. Douglas Owsley and Marilyn London at the Smithsonian Institution. Their work is well on schedule and their findings will be submitted in December 2000.

Thank you for your interest in historic preservation.

Sincerely,

*H. Arthur Bankoff/As*  
H. Arthur Bankoff  
Archaeological Advisor to the Chairman

*Amanda Sutphin*  
Amanda Sutphin  
Urban Archaeologist

cc: Ronda Wist, LPC  
John Natoli, DPR  
John Halpin, Barney Skanska  
Dr. Petar Glumac, Parsons Engineering Science  
Robert Kuhn, SHPO



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc. (PANYC)  
**From:** Stephen Lee, Jacqui Rubin  
**Re:** PANYC, Inc. and its new By-laws  
**Date:** March 15, 2000 (First Annual Meeting of the Members)

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As you should know by now, Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc.'s application as a non-profit corporation has been accepted and filed by the New York Department of State. PANYC is also about to apply for federal tax-exempt status.

Now that PANYC has incorporated and will probably have tax-exempt status soon, PANYC can secure such benefits as being able to accept tax-exempt donations and get reduced postal rates. However, PANYC must also remember to comply with state and federal requirements. For example, PANYC must include "Inc." in all its documents and mailings so that those interacting with the corporation know of this status. In addition, PANYC must comply with lobbying restrictions. Officers and Executive Board Members should consult the Starting Off Right guide and our Closing Memo which we have provided them

As part of the incorporation process, PANYC adopted a new set of By-laws. The new By-laws are based on PANYC's By-laws as an unincorporated association. PANYC may conduct the majority of its business as before, but the new By-laws do spell out certain additional powers for Members and clarify powers and responsibilities for Officers and Board Members. Specifically, PANYC Members may now call special meetings, remove Officers from their positions, and request that votes be held by ballot. Officers also have more clearly defined tasks and Executive Board Members can conduct business with a majority quorum.

In response to some questions, we would like to clarify some provisions in the By-laws. Article III, Section 4 states that PANYC will "elect" its new officers and Executive Board at the Annual Meeting of the Members. This means only that the transition will take place at the Meeting. Voting will still occur beforehand by mail-in ballot. Article III, Section 12 states that PANYC Members remove an officer "with or without cause." Cause is a legal term meaning conduct that is so egregious (i.e. embezzling money) that a judge could remove the officer. PANYC Members can remove an officer for less and would not need to justify a removal in court. Finally, Article III, Section 5 refers to "Initial Directors;" these positions have no relevance beyond PANYC's first Annual Meeting of the Members, which is the March 15,2000 meeting.

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Professional Archaeologists of New York City, Inc. (PANYC)  
**From:** Stephen Lee, Jacqui Rubin  
**Re:** Closing Memo: Legal and Tax Considerations in Going Forward, Federal and State Reporting Requirements, Postal Rates  
**Date:** March 2000

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This memo highlights specific issues and areas applicable to PANYC, its Officers and Executive Board members as PANYC begins its new existence as an incorporated, non-profit organization. It is important for PANYC's Officers and Executive Board members to have a thorough understanding of these topics as they prepare to take on the greater responsibilities of a tax-exempt corporation. Please read over these points and the applicable sections in Starting Off Right, the attached document which goes more in-depth into some of these areas. We will be happy to answer any questions in the coming months, though it will be harder to reach us after we graduate in May 2000.

Starting Off Right is meant to be a comprehensive resource for newly incorporated non-profit organizations in New York. Because PANYC has no plans to expand its scope or operation from what it has been for the past 20 years, many areas within Starting Off Right may not apply to PANYC. Nevertheless, we feel it is important for you to have this resource so that you know in advance what any changes within PANYC may mean for the organization's tax-exempt status and potential liabilities, and so that you may consult this resource in the future.

We wish you the best of luck and great success in the future. We have enjoyed working with you and your organization.

- Stephen Lee, Jacqui Rubin

#### I. Federal Tax Exemption: Maintaining 501(c)(3) Status

We anticipate that PANYC will be approved for 501(c)(3) status in the coming months. Once approved, in order to maintain its tax-exempt status, PANYC must comply with the following restrictions:

**Lobbying.** Remember that PANYC must not do what the IRS considers “substantial” amounts of lobbying. PANYC has chosen to have its lobbying efforts evaluated under the 501(h) election, and this election should remain in effect until it is revoked. The 501(h) election (sometimes referred to as the mechanical test) will judge lobbying activities based on monetary amounts. Volunteer time is **not** included in the calculation. For more information, see the Lobbying Handout we gave out at the Nov. 17 meeting, and which we have attached to this memo. Also see Starting Off Right, pages 3-5.

**Public charity status.** In its application for 501(c)(3) status, PANYC asked for an advance ruling that it be treated as a public charity for its first five taxable years, 1999-2004. At the end of this five-year period in 2005, the IRS will ask PANYC for detailed financial information to verify that PANYC has met the requirements for a public charity. Therefore, it is essential that you maintain detailed and accurate records of all contributions and income received during PANYC’s first five years as a tax-exempt organization. PANYC should be able to qualify under the mechanical test because your only source of current funding is membership dues (see Starting Off Right, page 7-8). If your funding sources change over time, you may need to get some expert advice about how this would affect your status. Contact the Clinic at that time for possible resources.

#### II. Federal Tax Exemption: Using PANYC’s 501(c)(3) Status

Once approved, PANYC must follow certain procedures regarding donors and acting as a fiscal sponsor in order to comply with the requirements of PANYC’s 501(c)(3) status.

**Donors.** PANYC has sought 501(c)(3) status in order to offer potential donors the benefit of having their donations be tax-deductible. To do so, PANYC must provide written acknowledgement of the gift to any taxpayer who donates \$250 or more. Acknowledgement should state the name of the donor, the date of the gift, and the amount. See Starting Off Right, page 11.

**Fiscal Sponsorship.** PANYC should get a written agreement before becoming a fiscal sponsor for another group or event. Contributions to PANYC which then go on to the sponsored group will not be tax-deductible to the donor unless the sponsored group meets the requirements discussed on Starting Off Right, page 16.

### III. State and City Tax Exemptions

Exemption from most New York state taxes depends on securing federal recognition of tax-exempt status. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, PANYC should be granted exemptions from New York State's corporate franchise tax and sales tax. The applications should be made after receiving the IRS's determination. We expect to be able to do this for PANYC, but this process is extremely simple and could be handled by PANYC's Treasurer if necessary.

### IV. Executive Board Duties and Responsibilities

**Duties.** As a non-profit corporation, PANYC Officers and Executive Board members have the benefit of **limited liability**, which means that they are not personally responsible for corporate obligations. However, in order to maintain that protection, PANYC Officers and Executive Board members must follow certain legal principles summarized in greater detail below and in Starting Off Right, pages 17-19.

- **Duty of care.** All Executive Board members must act in good faith and competently.
- **Duty of loyalty.** No Executive Board member can engage in self-dealing or benefit financially from transactions with PANYC.
- **Duty of obedience.** All Executive Board members must ensure that PANYC stay true to the purposes for which it was incorporated and for which it received tax-exempt status, and that PANYC is following its By-laws.

### V. Annual Reporting Requirements

**Federal requirements.** As long as PANYC's gross receipts are less than \$25,000 (as they currently are and probably will remain), PANYC does not need to file a Form 990 or 990-EZ with the IRS. However, PANYC should check off the box at the top of Form 990 to indicate gross receipts of less than \$25,000 and send the form in so that there are no questions raised regarding PANYC's status.

**Note:** If PANYC's gross receipts go above \$25,000, or if PANYC begins any kind of business activity, please see Starting Off Right, page 29 and consult a lawyer such as in Columbia's Non-Profit Organizations Clinic.

**Remember:** As discussed above, PANYC must present records after five years to show it is a public charity. See Starting Off Right, page 7-9.

**State requirements.** If PANYC ever plans to raise or receive more than \$25,000 in a single year, PANYC must register under the 8-1.4 of the Estates, Powers and Trusts Law

(EPTL) and Article 7A of the New York Executive Law. Additionally, it would have to file annual reports to the Charities Bureau of the Office of the Attorney General. If this ever happens, see Starting Off Right, page 30-31.

#### VI. Postage

**Reduced rate.** As a nonprofit organization, PANYC can get a 16.9 cent Nonprofit Standard Mail A rate. To mail at this rate, PANYC can purchase pre-canceled stamps in rolls of 500, lease a postage meter, or apply for a Business Reply Mail permit. See Starting Off Right, page 37.

The Following are the opening remarks made at the PANYC Public Program on April 16, 2000, at the Museum of the City of New York. They are reprinted here to commemorate our 20th Anniversary:

Good afternoon. My name is Joan Geismar, and as PANYC's president, I welcome you to the Museum of the City of New York. It gives all of us at PANYC great pleasure to have you join us for our 20th annual public program.

Over 20 years ago, on a cold Saturday afternoon, about 30 archaeologists--college and university professors, practitioners, and students--met in a lecture hall at New York University to inaugurate the Professional Archaeologists of New York City. Or, as it is fondly known, PANYC--with a "y."

As it happened, at the time we were in a panic: new preservation laws had come into effect, and a spate of development in Lower Manhattan had raised the archaeological community's awareness of the endangered resources abounding in the southern part of the city.

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission was then under the leadership of Kent Barwick. As conceived and implemented by its Executive Director, Lenore Norman, and its Director of Planning and Field Services, Edwin Friedman, the commission took New York City archaeology under its wing: it made sure that archaeological research was carried out where required, evaluated the scope of work to be done in concert with these development projects, and reviewed the reports generated by them. With their mutual goals, the Landmarks Preservation Commission and PANYC were strong allies. PANYC's aim was not then, nor is it now, to "dig," but to protect irreplaceable archaeological resources and, where they will be destroyed, make sure they are documented.

One of our major tasks is to raise the archaeological consciousness of the city, the developers, and the public. To this end, we give lectures, write letters--lots and lots of letters--and offer our yearly public program generously co-sponsored by the Museum of the City of New York.

Although archaeology in New York City came into its own in 1978 with the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), it is not a new concept. I don't know how many of you saw the PANYC exhibit in the museum's Community Gallery in 1997. Through pictures, text, and artifacts, it presented our antecedents, our history, our triumphs, and our disappointments.

For example, as early as 1904, William I. Calver excavated a Revolutionary War camp at 201st Street near the Harlem River. And, in 1913, there was a group from the New York Historical Society called "The Committee on Field Explorations" excavating sites in upper Manhattan. These archaeological pioneers were among the first in a continuum of New York City archaeologists. They include the late Bert Salwen, who has been called the father of historical archaeology, and Ralph Solecki, PANYC's first president, shown here in Alaska, who is one of today's speakers. Both were initiators and founding members of PANYC.

Among our triumphs was the successful promotion of archaeological investigation of the Atlantic Terminal Site in Brooklyn. This site had been looted by what we call pot hunters, but still

contained rich material that documented middle-class life in the 19th century. This included the block's backyard sanitary facilities, such as this excavated dry-laid stone privy pit.

Also, because of PANYC's intervention, there is now a permanent exhibit on Ellis Island where the excavated walls of Fort Gibson were about to be covered over. PANYC was called upon to encourage the authorities to leave the fort walls exposed. We rose to the challenge, the National Park Service complied, and now the Fort Gibson outdoor exhibit graphically illustrates how the island, like much of nearby Manhattan, has been enlarged through filling: the fort's walls, once on the island's shore, are now well inland, repositioned by landfill that made the island almost 5 times its original size.

And, in a bitter-sweet vein, again, in Lower Manhattan: here a developer took a foundation excavation to bedrock in the core of Dutch New Amsterdam before applying for a special permit. The permit application triggered the environmental review process. The Landmarks Preservation Commission and PANYC testified before the Board of Standards and Appeals, a mediating body, and compensation was demanded. Without a penalty, the developer's actions might have set a precedent undermining New York's preservation laws. The result was that while potential archaeological resources may have been lost, New York City got its first and only archaeological conservation lab and museum, NEW YORK UNEARTHED, at 17 State Street.

But PANYC has also had its outright disappointments. We have tried to introduce legislation that would require the city to consider archaeological resources in developing its own properties. But, after spending much time and making some headway, this quest is in limbo.

Well, that's where we have come from, and now on to today's program, REDISCOVERING THE PAST: THE LITTLE AND BIG PICTURE. Let's see where we are, and in what direction we



# New York Institute of Anthropology

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH, FINE ARTS AND HUMANITIES  
 19 Slosson Terrace - Suite 3-C  
 St. George, New York 10301

Telephone: (718) 815-6302

30 November 1999

Hon. Guy V. Molinari  
 Borough President  
 Borough Hall  
 Staten Island, NY 10301

Dear Borough President Molinari:

There is growing public concern for the rescue and preservation of our rich cultural and historical archaeological treasures spanning some 12,000 years here on Staten Island. We recognize on-going necessary urban development projects. However, it is now imperative that priority also be given to the critical need for rescuing our rapidly diminishing non-renewable cultural resources which presently remain undisturbed.

The damage done to the environment can often be repaired or reversed. We can establish wildlife refuge preserves, depollution of our waters, reforestation and other concerns. We can always plant and grow a new tree, but we can not grow more prehistoric and historic archaeological sites. Their destruction is permanent.

Members of this educational agency have been engaged in archaeological research studies on Staten Island dating back to 1968. Enclosed, please find recent Newsletters regarding on-going research studies and concerns for the future. It remains obvious that your personal involvement, and support of your good offices, will help to insure rescue and preservation of the past for our children's children.

There is now urgent need in a race against time for archaeologists being permitted on potential sites for a reasonable amount of time before the arrival of backhoes and bulldozers. Archaeologists are not against "progress," they are concerned with the unnecessary loss and destruction of our heritage!

We would like to meet with you and representatives of your office to explore immediate and long range objectives, some of the specific areas requiring cooperation and input, and help develop effective education of private sector cooperation in ongoing research programs.

Thanking you for your attention and consideration for a meeting at your earliest convenience, we remain with best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Edward J. Platt  
 President



# Centuries of S.I. culture in danger, say anthropologists

By TOM DEIGNAN

When Staten Islanders complain that overdevelopment is turning their home borough into another Brooklyn or Queens, bucolic, pre-Verrazano images from thirty or forty years ago come to mind.

But for St. George resident Ed Platt, it's not just traffic and overcrowding that are big problems on Staten Island. No less than 10,000 years of history is at stake.

"A lot of people want to know about their ancestors, who was here before we were," said Platt, who's been digging up the ground around Staten Island since the late 1960's. "At the moment, we're seeing valuable archeological sites obliterated with total indifference."

Platt is the president and one

of the founders of the New York Institute of Anthropology (NYIA), a 30-year old organization which started in Queens, and has long been investigating Staten Island's buried history. NYIA has been organizing digs, publishing and displaying its findings and recording New York's ancient past for three decades now.

The problem is, for a variety of reasons, they're unable to present their findings to the Staten Island public.

NYIA does have an ambitious exhibit currently up and running in Queens, but Platt says the group wants to expand its presentations to this borough.

"We want to reach Staten Islanders and show them their cultural heritage," he said.

## Harsh History Lessons

In recent months, said Platt, two active sites along the Arthur Kill shoreline have produced 10,000-year-old artifacts such as bows, spear points and other primitive tools.

But more recent history has taught Platt and NYIA a harsh lesson. NYIA has zeroed in on overdevelopment - in Staten Island and throughout New York City - as the number one threat to its mission, which is piecing together the story of humanity's past in the area.

Unless rampant building is checked, say Platt and his group, gaping historical holes will remain. "This is not something that can be replaced," Platt said. "You can plant a new tree, but you can't plant a new archeological site. We've got to get to these sites around (Staten Island) before they're destroyed."

Or, as Platt wrote in a recent NYIA newsletter, "Across the nation we are losing the race against necessary progress to salvage our rapidly diminishing non-renewable cultural resources. In the absence of collective realistic strategy to reduce losses the future destruction is tragically obvious."

NYIA has even made efforts to lobby local officials, up to and including Borough President Guy Molinari.

"It remains obvious that your personal involvement, and support of your good offices, will help to insure rescue and preservation of the past for our children's children," Platt wrote in a recent letter to Molinari, requesting a meeting



Edward Platt records measurements by Albert Felicia on a New York prehistoric site.

with the BP.

The letter, sent two months ago, continues: "Archaeologists are not

concerned with the unnecessary loss and destruction of our heritage."

No Help From Boro Hall

But, despite the fact that a follow-up letter has been sent and a phone call made, Molinari has yet to respond to the original letter.

"I think the borough president is more concerned with politics than culture," said Platt, perhaps referring to Molinari's highly visible defection from presidential candidate George W. Bush's camp to John McCain's.

Platt said he needs Borough Hall's help on several fronts: He would like to work with Staten Island's Planning Department so

that construction sites can be investigated before they are torn up for development.

Platt also said he thinks the borough president could help NYIA find places on Staten Island to display their findings.

"We don't just want this stuff sitting around in boxes," Platt said.

"We want the public to see this."

But none of it can happen because Molinari has yet to respond. A phone call to Borough Hall, said Platt, had a staffer scrambling just to locate NYIA's letter. That is the extent of aid Borough Hall has offered thus far.

(Borough Hall does not speak to the Register.) Now is a particularly critical time, in the eyes of Platt and NYIA's roughly 16 members, because they've already seen the

continued on page 23



Part of an earlier NYIA traveling exhibit of prehistoric and Native American artifacts spanning 12,000 years.

New York Institute of Anthropology  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH, FINE ARTS AND HUMANITIES  
17 Slosson Terrace, Suite 2-F  
St. George, N.Y. 10301-2506.  
NYIA

NEWSLETTER

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New York Institute of Anthropology

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH, FINE ARTS AND HUMANITIES  
17 Slosson Terrace, Suite 2-F  
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NYIA

### S.I. culture in danger

continued from page five  
loss of what they consider precious cultural resources in other boroughs.

Asking "Will history repeat itself?" in another newsletter, Platt writes: "Will Richmond County (Staten Island) witness the devastating duplication of tragic cultural resource losses that were inflicted upon archaeological sites in Kings (Brooklyn) and Queens County, New York?"

#### Shorelines, Tottenville Vulnerable

The same article even makes reference to the on-again, off-again proposal to construct a highway which might extend from Father Capodanno Boulevard all the way to the southern tip of Staten Island.

For NYIA, this is a disastrous proposal. "We must not have a repeat of the Queens/Brooklyn parkway site destructions," writes Platt.

"I know there's a lot of stuff around there," he adds in an interview, referring to the area that begins at New Dorp Beach and extends all the way to the southern shore. "You just have to go down a foot and a half, and you could be going back 10,000 years."

According to Platt, Tottenville is also a particularly vulnerable area.

"Everybody's just ripping that place apart," he laments.

Platt said some development in the borough should take place only after groups like NYIA have a chance to assess the cultural value of an area.

"Even if we pull (artifacts) out of the ground after a site has been bulldozed, its continuity is lost. Was this a hunting site,

was it a farming site? You'll never know," he said.

#### Lack of Funds

Another problem NYIA faces is not unusual for such groups—a lack of funding. Again, Platt had been hoping to lobby Borough Hall for some discretionary money, which might help hire staff, as well as fund digs or displays. Until that happens, said Platt, members typically fund NYIA's work—from publishing its newsletter to organizing sites—out of their own pockets.

This prevents NYIA from moving ahead with some of its more ambitious plans, which would include extensive exhibits, and putting together a slide show that could be made available to schools.

"We have a lot of plans," said Platt, "but we just don't have the funds."

For now, NYIA does have an exhibit at Fort Totten, in the northeast section of Queens, which is open to the public. The Bayside Historical Society has helped the group put together a wide-ranging exhibit which fills three buildings.

"Everything you can imagine is there," Platt said. This includes prehistoric tools, weapons, as well as Native American artifacts such as an Iroquois mask, which the group has on loan.

"It's designed for people of all ages; classes have been going there," said Platt. It's just the type of exhibit NYIA would like to bring to Staten Island. The group does have a temporary office in St. George, but they're on the lookout for something more permanent.

For more information, NYIA can be reached at 815-6302.

### Staten Island REGISTER

The community newspaper

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### FUTURE GENERATIONS NEED YOUR HELP!

THIS IS A URGENT CALL TO RESCUE OUR CULTURAL RESOURCES. IT IS ADDRESSED TO ALL OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS, OUR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARDS, EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESS AND PRIVATE SECTOR INDIVIDUALS.

OUR ENVIRONMENTALISTS ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH PRESERVING WET LANDS AND TREES. THEY NEGLECT TO ADDRESS POTENTIAL MILLENNIUMS OF CULTURAL GROUPS ACTIVE IN THIS REGION WHICH DATE BACK 12,000 YEARS AGO. LETS SAVE BOTH OUR ENVIRONMENT AND OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES!

COUNCILMAN JEROME X. O'DONOVAN RECENT WROTE "ISLANDERS KNOW OVERDEVELOPMENT WHEN THEY SEE IT - AND THEY SEE IT." S.I. ADVANCE, 28 JAN. 2000 BUT THEY DO NOT SEE THE CULTURAL LOSSES BEFORE RESCUING OUR UNIQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES DO TO URBAN PROJECTS!!

WE SHOULD ALL BE INDEBTED TO THE STATEN ISLAND REGISTER. THEIR ARTICLE AND CULTURAL CONCERNS INSPIRED UNANSWERED NYIA LETTERS TO BOROUGH PRESIDENT MOLINARI (30 NOV. 1999 - 5 JAN. 2000) TO BE IMMEDIATELY ACKNOWLEDGED BY PHONE. A IMPORTANT CONFERENCE INVOLVING MANY S.I. DEPARTMENTS IS NOW BEING SCHEDULED FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 12. ACTUAL DATE AND TIME WILL BE ANNOUNCED. THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY WHICH MUST NOT BE LOST BY CULTURAL GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED. THOSE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING SHOULD CONTACT NYIA. THOSE WHO CAN NOT ARE URGED TO WRITE THEIR CONCERN AND MAIL SUCH TO NYIA BEFORE MARCH 10th. LET'S ALL GET TOGETHER, FACE THE PROBLEMS AND SAVE OUR HERITAGE!!

THANK YOU,

*Edward J. Platt*  
Edward J. Platt  
President. NYIA

YOUR TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS ARE DESPERATELY NEEDED AND DEEPLY APPRECIATED!  
YOUR PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IS NEEDED. IF NOT A MEMBER, DON'T DELAY, JOIN TODAY!

# The Arts

The New York Times

## Take 2: A Photo Archive of City Streets

By RALPH BLUMENTHAL

Smile, New York. You're getting your picture taken.

All New York.

In an ambitious effort to expand an already vast photo archive showing practically every street in the five boroughs as long ago as the 1870's, the New York Public Library is preparing to repeat the process to match many of the 54,000 old views with contemporary ones.

Perhaps 30,000 of the existing images now part of the library's new Milstein history division in the Humanities and Social Sciences Library at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street are the work of an enigmatic and unsung shutterbug named Percy Loomis

Sperr. Though often on crutches after a bout of childhood meningitis that killed his sister and brother, he roamed the city from the 1920's to the 40's snapping street scenes of haunting ordinariness, if not banality, as Official Photographer for the City of New York — whatever that meant. The updated portrait of New York would to some extent retrace his footsteps.

"These are incredible times of real estate development, and the beginning of the century is a wonderful time to capture what is there," said William D. Walker, the public library's Andrew W. Mellon director of research libraries.

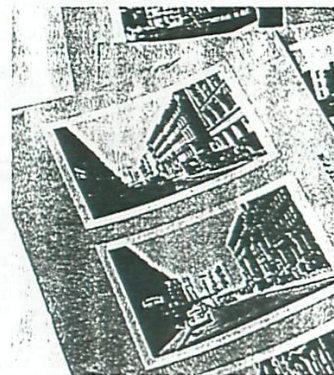
Although the library has yet to raise the projected \$750,000 budget, Mr. Walker voiced confidence in an interview that the project would go forward next year, with 14 photographers working as long as two

years. The results would be digitized for easy computer access by preservationists, planners, builders, writers and moviemakers. Many of the original pictures, to which the library holds the rights, will also be digitized as part of a library-wide effort to record its holdings on computer, Mr. Walker said.

Paul LeClerc, president of the library, called the project an "ingenious" one that would expand the library's role from repository and preserver of history to generator of new information.

The effort grows out of the library's new Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy, which opened in January in a restored suite on its first floor overlooking Bryant

Continued on Page 8



Photographs of West 52nd Street in Manh

### MUSIC REVIEW

Greek Music

# Library Plans a Photo Archive of the City Old and New

Continued From First Arts Page

...renamed section, created in a \$5 million gift from the Milsteins, a family of developers and anthropologists, brings together microfilm and other research materials long scattered in other parts of the library and a specialized staff to handle public inquiries, particularly genealogical research, which draws about half the visitors to the division.

In a private dedication ceremony on Jan. 23, Mr. LeClerc and the library's chairman, Samuel C. Butler, said the gift would secure one of the library's prized collections, Mike Wallace, co-author of the voluminous history "Gotham," which made extensive use of the library's local history archives, said, "I'm suffused with joy each time I walk into this treasure house."

Abby S. Milstein, a lawyer, a trustee of the library and a daughter-in-law of the donors, said in a statement this week that the gift sought to convey the family's "deep appreciation for the New York Public Library as a source of knowledge which is freely available to all." Paul and Mrs. Milstein, she said, "shared the vision of a beautiful space where all users can encounter great intellectual treasures and examine the record of our shared and personal histories."

The archive of 54,000 photographs in the library's local history collection has long been known to scholars, researchers and even filmmakers, who have used the prints to create



The new Milstein history division of the New York Public Library.

authentic sets for movies like "The Godfather" and "The Great Gatsby."

"What people don't know," said Ruth Carr, chief of the Milstein division, "is that it's so large because of the work that Percy Loomis Sperr did."

Sperr, who once wrote "I am as much of a camera fan" but saw himself rather as a storyteller, "the tale of the City of New York" died in 1964 at 75.

His New York is a city of horse-drawn milk wagons and broodmare mansions, snack bar snacks for clamorous shopping docks, fleet men in straw hats, strangely empty streets and demolition sites destined for skyscrapers like the Woolworth

Building.

Organized in file folders by street numbers and names with the date and a description of each view noted on the back, the photos play tricks with memory and landscape. A long-vanished movie house playing a Run Tin Tin film juts from 74th Street at First Avenue in Manhattan. A hulking fortress — once the Jewish Memorial Hospital — rises out of the forested hills of Inwood Park at Dyckman Street near the Hudson River, where ferries plied the waters to Fort Lee, N.J.

The library will not try to reshoot all 54,000 old sites or even all of the 30,000 Sperr locations, officials said. Rather it will concentrate on places, particularly in Manhattan but in the

## A New York of milk wagons and clamoring docks.

other boroughs as well, where there has been dramatic change.

Despite Sperr's extensive work for the library, little is known about him, Ms. Carr said. A manuscript article by A. J. Peluso Jr. based on archive: from Staten Island and other Sperr haunts says that he was born in Columbus, Ohio, in 1889, graduated from Oberlin College in 1912 and migrated to New York around 1924 hoping to find work as a writer and to illustrate his writings with his photographs. But picture-taking soon took precedence.

He was often asked, he wrote in 1934, "Is that all you do, just go around taking pictures?"

"Yes," he would answer. "Taking a few thousand pictures a year and selling enough of them to pay most of the expense does not leave much time for anything else."

Still, he said, "My own interest is rather in the story than in the picture. It is the picture which tells the story. As literally as possible, I would use the 'universal language' and 'speak it with photographs.' The story which interests me is one which lends itself to unlimited photography — the tale of the City of New York."

Somehow — it was never clear how, Mr. Peluso wrote — Sperr became known as Official Photographer of the City of New York on a recorded major groundbreaking: demolitions and civic ceremonies. Those photos are plainly documentary, without notable artistic flourishes.

World War II limited his access to the waterfront, and his picture-taking declined. A 1943 letter in the library files states: "Percy Sperr came to 204 last week and announced that he had gone into the second-hand book and print business on a small scale, specializing in material pertaining to New York. He has an office on Staten Island, near his home."

He opened a used-book store at sold poetry and old comic books three for a dime. He admitted occasionally drifting off to sleep, "which isn't good for business."

But his business card still lists his wares: "A growing collection over 30,000 views of New York Harbor; ships, old and modern; skyline-dock scenes, harbor craft, sunsets, bridges, naval vessels, New York City, all five boroughs; street scenes, skyscrapers, old houses, foreign quarters, pushcarts, farms, old New York scenes."



Special Issue of Times Magazine

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### Radio Highlights

#### Classical Music

9 A.M.-NOON WQXR-FM (96.3) SAINT-SAENS: Concerto No. 4 in C minor for Piano (Op. 41); TELEMANN: Suite in A minor for Flute and Strings; GRAMIGER: "Lincolnton Post"; MOZART: Quartet No. 2 in G for Flute and Strings.

9 A.M.-NOON WNYC-FM (93.9): Morning Music FAURE: Impromptu; BACH: Cello Suite No. 1; VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: "Wasps" Incidental Music.

NOON-3 P.M. WQXR-FM (96.3) VIEUX-TEMPS: Concerto No. 2 in F sharp minor for Violin (Op. 19); RICHTER: Trumpet Concerto in D; CHOPIN: Scherzo No. 1 in B minor (Op. 20); PUCCINI: "Tosca" Act II.

NOON-4 P.M. WNYC-FM (93.9): Midday Music BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 3; FRANCAIS: Divertissements; MANEN: "Mimamures."

3-7 P.M. WQXR-FM (96.3) SAINT-SAENS: Concerto No. 2 in D minor for Cello (Op. 119); MENDELSSOHN: "Ruy Blas" Overture; BERNSTEIN: "Fancy Free" Excerpts; SCHUBERT: "In the Italian Style" Overture in D; WALTON: "The Wise Virgins" Suite.

7-9 P.M. WQXR-FM (96.3) ELGAR: "Woods of Youth" Suite; TELEMANN: "La Blanche" Suite; TELEMANN: "Water Music" Overture.

FLUSHING



# Above, an Old Playground; Below, Graves for the Poor

A long-awaited archaeological study of Martins Field, a rundown playground on 46th Avenue and 165th Street, has concluded that the site may hold the remains of more than 1,000 people from the 19th century. Many of them were poor children from minorities barred from graveyards reserved for whites.

Still, many residents want to keep the site as a playground and to refurbish it with new swings and basketball courts. "The children here have no place to play," said David Copell, who lives across the street. "The nearest playground is more than half a mile away."

Others disagree. "A cemetery is not a place to play," said Mandingo Tshaka, a local activist. "It is supposed to be respected."

In the past, the site was known as the "Colored Cemetery" or the "Paupers' Burial Ground," in city documents. Many blacks and American Indians were buried there in the second half of the 19th century, in part because Flushing Cemetery, which opened across the street in 1853, was off-limits, said James Driscoll, executive director of the Queens Historical Society.

The playground was built in 1936 by Robert Moses. News accounts of the time tell of bodies unearthed by the construction. "The city knowingly and willfully desecrated the cemetery to create a wading pool for white children," Mr. Tshaka said.

After years of neglect, the park was scheduled for a \$1.2 million renovation in the early 1990's, when Mr. Tshaka presented evidence that there were still bodies buried there. So the Parks Department suspended the project and commissioned an archaeologist, Linda Stone, to analyze historical documents and to conduct "noninvasive" radar tests to determine burial locations.

"In my original report, I estimated 500 to 1,000 bodies," Ms. Stone said. "If the anomalies on the radar are bodies, there could be more." The results were released in early

March. Parks Commissioner Henry J. Stern supports a playground, saying, "The community has legitimate recreational needs." But he added that the 3.5-acre park should have a "significant memorial," in the form of plaques or designated areas.

"There is room for the living as well as the dead," he said.

But Ralph Bunn, whose great-grandfather's burial was among the last recorded on the site, said that any playground there was an "insult to Native American people" and teaches children "to disrespect other



Richard Lee for The New York Times

"A cemetery is not a place to play," Mandingo Tshaka says.

people's ancestors."

"We are tired of having our dead disrespected," said Mr. Bunn, who is of Native American descent and lives in Wyandanch, on Long Island.

Mr. Stern said the next step was to attempt to reach a compromise among officials, residents, historical groups and descendants.

City Councilwoman Julia Harrison, who represents the area, declined to discuss her position.

DENNY LEE

The New York Times, Sunday, April 2, 2000

April 2000 • Anthropology News



"AS AN ANTHROPOLOGIST, I'VE BEEN TO TROPIC JUNGLES AND FROZEN TUNDRAS. I'VE SEEN PRIMITIVE CULTURES AND SOPHISTICATED SOCIETIES. BUT THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE WHERE I'VE BEEN UNABLE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S GOING ON."

## PANYC EVENTS COMMITTEE REPORT - May 17 - September 30, 2000

EVENT	SPEAKER	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	PHONE #	FEE
African Burial Ground OPEI Open House		Sat. 5/20	12 PM	6 WTC, Room 239	212-432-5707	free
The Archaeology of Brooklyn's Historic Waterfront	Nancy Brighton	Wed. 5/24	6 PM	South Street Seaport Museum, Low Gallery, 165 John St.	212-748-8600	free
Prospect Cemetery Lecture and Tour	Cate Ludlam	Sat 6/3	1 PM	King Manor Museum, Jamaica	718-206-0545	\$5
Roman Glass: Reflections on Cultural Change	exhibit	thru 6/11		Bard Graduate Center, 18 W.86 St.	212-501-3000	\$2
African Burial Ground Film Festival		Sat. 6/17	12 PM	6 WTC, Room 239	212-432-5707	free
The Art of Japan from the Mary Griggs Burke Collection	exhibit	thru 6/25		Metropolitan Museum of Art	212-879-5500	admission
The New York Century: World capital, Home Town, 1900-2000	exhibit	thru 7/9		Museum of the City of New York	212-534-1672	admission
Crossroads and Cross Rivers	exhibit	thru 8/15		Philipsburg Manor	914-631-8200	
African Burial Ground Film Festival		Sat. 9/16	12 PM	6 WTC, Room 239	212-432-5707	free
Elegant Plate: Three Centuries of Precious Metals in New York City	exhibit	thru 9/24		Museum of the City of New York	212-534-1672	admission

If any members have events which they would like listed, please contact Linda Stone by phone or fax at (212)888-3130 or by mail 249 E 48 St. #2B, New York, NY 10017.

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 Linda Stone, PANYC Secretary, 249 East 48 Street, #2B, New York, NY 10017

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