FRIENDS OF FORT TOTTEN PARKS
Newsletter

P.O. Box 604984, Bayside, NY 11360 (718) 670—3684

Volume 7 / Issue 2

FAMILY FUN DAY - 2012

The Friends of Fort Totten Parks Family Fun Day 2012 was held on a picture perfect day this past June. An estimated 2500 people visited the event during the course of the day enjoying a variety of free events and rides. The event was co-sponsored by the Parks Department along with funding from Councilman Daniel Halloran who joined in the festivities. It was a fun day to be out in the fresh air enjoying the views of the bay and hearing kids having a ball.

Many thanks to all the friends of Fort Totten volunteers, Janice Melnick, Councilman Halloran and the NYC Parks Department and the following vendors for providing their services and/or give away items.

~ The Cord Meyer Development Corporation ~
~ Dunkin Doughnuts / Baybridge Bell Boulevard ~
~ Whole Foods / Manhasset ~
~ The New York Mets ~
~ NYFD Fire Safety Unit ~

This howling good time is here once again !
Ranger guided tours will take place
October 26 & 27 2012
6.30—8.30 PM
Not for the faint of heart !
Park Rangers take groups through the haunted fort— follow the crowds to the battery

The Annual Meeting of
THE FRIENDS OF FORT TOTTEN PARKS
MONDAY
October 15, 2012 7:30PM
AGENDA
What’s new at the Fort?
Committee reports
Elections
New & Old business

MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE PARKS DEPARTMENT BUILDING
(Please see website for map) Parking will be allowed on the fort grounds adjacent to the Parks Bldg. )

Want a say on how your tax dollars are spent?
Councilman Dan Halloran would like to invite the Community to participate in deciding how $1 million will be allocated in Northeast Queens. Please join us and make your voice heard at a meeting to participatory budgeting where residents will decide how their dollars are spent.

The meeting will be held during the first week of October at PS 169 18-25 212 Street, Bayside, NY. Please contact Councilman Halloran’s office (718) 631 6703 or Sondra Youdelman (212) 860 6001 x 21

Friends of Fort Totten Halloween Festival
Saturday, October 20, 2012 ~ 12 noon till 3.00PM
(raindate: October 21)

Join us for a free day of spooky family fun on the parade grounds.
Games, rides, craft projects, costume contest, hay rides, pumpkin patch and goodie bags.
Sponsored in part by Councilman Dan Halloran.

Fort Totten Is Not Just Another Park — It’s “Our” Park!
Friends of Fort Totten Sponsorship Program

The Friends of Fort Totten Parks are able to offer a number of free programs to the community due in part to the efforts of our volunteers and our members. The Board of Directors and Committee Chairs put in countless hours of planning and legwork to make these programs work. All these efforts need funding for materials and related items. If not for the generosity of various Commercial businesses, Private Donors and Elected Officials we would not be able to offer the Crafty Totten Kids crafts events, the Family Fun days, or Halloween events. The Adult Painting Class along with funding parts of the Parks Department Ranger Station and astronomy class would also not be possible. Although we can’t thank these groups and individuals enough, we would like to highlight one company this month who has been a generous sponsor to our organization. The Manhasset Whole Foods Market. — Pat Riot

Whole Foods Market – Manhasset is a proud Sponsor of The Friends of Fort Totten Parks. Public parks play an important role in any community, and we’re happy to support the events that bring the residents of the greater Bayside area together in this beautiful space.

We opened our doors in Manhasset in 1996 and have served the greater community since, realizing the core values of the company as a whole.

Founded in 1980 in Austin, Texas, Whole Foods Market is the leading natural and organic food retailer. As America’s first national certified organic grocer, Whole Foods Market was named “America’s Healthiest Grocery Store” by Health magazine.

The company’s motto, “Whole Foods, Whole People, Whole Planet™ captures its mission to ensure customer satisfaction and health, Team Member excellence and happiness, enhanced shareholder value, community support and environmental improvement.
The Monk Parrot

If you've heard a flock of loud and squawking parrots in Queens and wondered, "where did they come from?" Chances are you've just seen a flock of Monk Parrots. They are common in and around Fort Totten these days and all over Long Island for that matter.

Also known as Quaker Parrots, these colorful and intelligent birds are originally from Argentina and surrounding areas of South America. There are various theories as to how they made it this far north but the first parrots were seen in the 1970's in Green Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn. One theory is that these birds, considered a pest in Argentina were imported to the USA and then escaped, adapting to our climate and food sources. Today, there is a large colony that has established itself there, much to the dismay of power companies. Monk Parrots build their nests on top of power poles and transformers in large communal style nests.

Photography Contest

The Friends of Fort Totten Parks are holding a photography contest. The contest is open to all ages. The purpose of this contest is to highlight the natural beauty within Fort Totten Parks. Photographs must be of anything within the park boundaries. Nature, visitors, seasonal changes, local wildlife, pets and areas of historical interest are all encouraged as subject matter.

Judges will review the submitted photos and decide on twelve pictures for possible inclusion to a calendar which will be available from the Friends of Fort Totten Parks. The contest is open to both amateur and professional photographers. The contest will be opened on May 1, 2012 and close May 1, 2013. Photos received before opening day or after closing will not be considered in this contest.

Rules and details on page four of this issue.

'Eco–Dock' considered for Little Bay

The Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, a non profit group that seeks to open the city's waterways to the public, recently proposed a dock area to Community Board 7's Park Committee for the Bayside area. Installation could be a possibility in 2014 or 2015 if the plan is approved.

The "eco-docks" are floating docks that would rise and fall with the tides and provide waterfront access to local kayakers, fishermen and those that might just want to stick their feet in the water.

The meeting was primarily for information purposes, providing an outline of how they would be constructed and used. Ms Becky Schneider representing the Waterfront Alliance noted that a particular spot had not been selected and that her group would pay for the installation but that maintenance and repairs would be up to the Parks Department. The Parks Dept has not made any statement regarding the issue.

Local members of Community Board 7 were in agreement with the plan but with the stipulation that the city finish already allocated projects including the public comfort station and parking lot expansion outside the Fort Totten Main Gate.

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Photography Contest Rules

Rules:
- Four photographs per photographer will be permitted.
- Chosen photos will become property of the Friends of Fort Totten. Photo credit will always be given.
- All photographs are assumed to be taken by the person submitting them. Photos chosen for use in the newsletter or a calendar will require a release indicating no copy rights have been infringed. Photographers under 18 yrs of age will require written parental permission.
- Pictures can only be of the parkland facilities. No pictures of US ARMY, US Coast Guard, NYPD or FDNY property may be taken or submitted.

Submission format:
- Photo style of any type will be permitted.
- Seasonal photos are encouraged (spring through winter).
- Color or black & white are acceptable.
- Digital or scanned photos are acceptable.
- Subject matter must be restricted to inside the park boundaries. Photos that include the Throgs Neck Bridge are not acceptable as they are restricted under Homeland Security laws.

Submission location:
- Photos will only be accepted via Email to the following Email address.
  TottenPhotoContest@gmail.com
- Size of entry is limited to Email server limitations.
- Photos MUST be labeled with your name, description/location and approximate date. example - “John Smith/The Battery/December 2012”
- Credit will be given to any photos chosen.

Judges reserve the right to:
- Discard any photos deemed in poor taste.
- Rename or relabel a photo to suit the needs of a calendar.
- Alter size, contrast or crop as to have the photo fit into the style and size of a calendar.
- All decisions are final and cannot be appealed.

Don’t Give Up The Ship

It’s a well known phrase and flag flown from many United States Navy vessels and across our lands. It is often incorrectly attributed to Commodore Perry, United States Navy as its source. It was in fact the dying words of Commodore Perry’s close friend, Captain James Lawrence.

James Lawrence (1781—1813) served as an American naval officer during the war of 1812. During the first year of the war, the US Navy won a number of surprising victories in ship to ship battles with the British Navy. The British were surprised, startled and confounded as they considered their own navy a far superior fighting force to the Americans.

In February 1813, Lawrence’s sloop of war, USS Hornet engaged the HMS Peacock, winning a decisive battle against the British brig sloop. In recognition, Lawrence was promoted to Captain and given command of the frigate, USS Chesapeake.

Captain Lawrence, sailed from Boston where he came upon and engaged the HMS Shannon in a fierce battle. HMS Shannon had outgunned the USS Chesapeake, mortally wounding Captain Lawrence by small arms fire. His crew carried him below decks where he ordered his officers, “Don’t give up the ship. Fight her (meaning the ship) till she sinks”. Captain Lawrence died of his wounds in June of 1813 while the Chesapeake was directed to Halifax, Nova Scotia as a prize of war by the British.

Lawrence was buried in Halifax but re—interred at Trinity Church Cemetery in New York City.

Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry immortalized his friend’s words by adopting the phrase “Don’t Give Up The Ship” as his personal battle flag aboard his flag ship the USS Lawrence (also named for Capt. Lawrence). This flag first flew in the Battle of Lake Erie in September 1813. Pat Riot
It's been seven years since the first issue of the FOFT newsletter went to press. Since then we’ve seen Fort Totten grow and change into a full fledged public park. Many unused areas have been transformed into open green spaces and many free programs have been introduced by numerous organizations. Change is good, it can bring fresh ideas and interested people to a common goal.

In the interest of change, this will be the last issue with us at helm. It’s time to have a fresh outlook and new ideas.

We’d like to thank everyone associated with the organization for their support & guidance. It’s been a fun bunch of years learning about the park and reporting the progress through the newsletter. We hope we have provided worthwhile information, a glimpse into the history of the fort and a smile to your face.

We hope you continue to enjoy the park and all the programs available. A lot of people, corporations and elected officials donate a huge amount of funds, goods, time & effort to make events and programs available to the community free of charge. Get involved, as much as you like, it’s not just any park—it’s really your park!

Regards, Lily Louis & Pat Riot

EDITORS NOTE

Photo credit is given when known. Other photos used are obtained from the internet and believed to be in the public domaine. Please notify us if otherwise and we will either attribute credit or remove the photo.—Ed
Medal of Honor for George Washington

There is currently an effort to have the Medal of Honor awarded to our first President. The effort is lead in part by John White, an author and former Naval Officer.

The Medal of Honor was first awarded in 1862, and it has been awarded to deserving soldiers both living and deceased for service in combat above and beyond the call of duty.

Washington was a tall man for his day at 6 feet 3 inches and was an easy target with his distinctive General’s uniform for a sharpshooter. It never stopped him from leading from the front of a charge against the enemy rather than the rear. The stories of his courage in battle are well documented and inspired his troops to hold together rather than flee from a larger force.

One such event in 1755 during the French and Indian War, Washington rode across an active battlefield numerous times spreading orders to other officers. At the close of the battle, Washington had two horses shot from under him and four musket ball holes in his coat. In the Battle of Princeton in 1777, he lead a charge of men and ordered them to fire only 30 yards away from the British line. When both sides fired, Washington disappeared in a cloud of smoke. When the smoke cleared, Washington was unharmed but the British line had broken. Washington then lead the charge yelling at his men to rally behind him which caused the enemy to retreat and flee.

According to Mr. White, awarding the Medal of Honor to General Washington would accomplish three objectives. ‘It would properly recognize his bravery in battle and would bring public attention to his accomplishments and bravery. In addition, it would elevate the General as a role model for young people showing them the courage that defines a true hero as opposed to paper ones.’

Ed note—It was Washington himself that ordered the creation of the US Medal of Honor (then known as the “Badge of Military Merit”) in August of 1782 to recognize “any singularly meritorious action”. A revision of that bill was signed by then President Abraham Lincoln into law in December 1861. The medal was “to be bestowed upon such petty officers, seamen, landsmen, and Marines”. Shortly after a resolution to include the Army was added to the law. There are those who would argue that as Washington was an officer, he would not be eligible for this medal.

Source WSJ 1/27/12

Family Fun Day 2012

Left
Action at the Arts & Crafts table lead by Meg Branzetti

Right
Book reading & story telling with Jasmine Amely & Sylvia Johnson
Possible Ancestral Burial Grounds on Fort Totten

In 1895, William Wilkins approached a sentry guard at the fort gate of a very active military base, Fort Totten. He was challenged and ultimately denied access to what Wilkins described as his family’s ancestral burial grounds inside the fort.

Wilkins insisted that the land on which the fort now stood was part of the farmland owned by his family. The land was sold to the Willet family and then again to the US Government before the Civil War. Wilkins stated a special provision had been made prior to the sale leaving the burial grounds intact and the property of the Wilkins family.

Nearly one hundred years later Tom Loggia, the great-grandnephew of William Wilkins has embarked on a quest to locate and acknowledge the existence of the family burial area. Mr. Loggia has pursued a goal to have the burial grounds of his forefathers designated with a marker to replace the vanished headstones of thirty family members & friends.

Initially, the only “proof” of its existence were stories from his childhood years spun by his Grandmother. Then on one occasion, Tom lifted a small framed picture of his mother and out fell a small slip of paper with his mother’s handwriting. The paper had instructions how to find a record of the 1829 deed of sale which was ultimately recovered from the basement of the Queens Registrar in Jamaica. The deed did in fact list a cemetery but no indication of its location on the property.

A few years ago, an Atlanta resident, Elizabeth Knowlton had read Loggia’s postings on tracing ancestors. She sent him a note along with a NY Times article from 1895 which reported on the encounter between the Fort Totten gate sentry and William Wilkins. The article also gives the rough coordinates to the cemetery’s location on the fort. The then President of the Bayside Historical Society, Paul DiBenedetto commented that the story was plausible based on the historical deeds and documents.

According to the NY Times (6/22/12) Loggia has not shared the records he secured nor has made a formal request to search the area since he narrowed the possible location to a five acre patch. The Parks Dept. has stated they “have received no evidence of a family grave site in Fort Totten”.

Mr. Loggia will no doubt continue his research to memorialize his family members and to remind us that “they existed.”


Friends of Fort Totten Sponsorship Program

The Friends of Fort Totten Parks have begun a sponsorship program in cooperation with local and nationwide corporations in order to fund the various programs and events we offer. These corporations are the cornerstones of our community and realize the importance of community spirit and funding local civic programs.

If your company would like to be part of the sponsorship program please contact us via our website.

Www.FortTottenParks.org

Platinum Sponsor - $1000.00  Gold Sponsor - $500.00

Bronze Sponsor - $250.00  Silver Sponsor - $100.00

FORT TOTTEN PARK UPDATE

As recently reported in both the NY Daily News and the Bayside Times the comfort station is a step closer to reality.

The Parks department announced in late July that the bidding process was underway and that a timeline of construction would be available after the July 31, 2012 cutoff date for bid submissions.

Senator Tony Avella, who was instrumental in securing one million dollars for the construction of the comfort station nearly seven years go, stated ground-breaking should begin by the end of the year. Senator Avella blamed the delays in what he referred to as “never ending bureaucratic delays”.

How the construction of the comfort station will fit into the expansion of the Little Neck Bay parking lot and rebuilding of the Cross Island Parkway—212 Street overpass is yet to be seen. Stay tuned!

Officers of the Friends of Fort Totten

Co—President Joe Branzetti
Co—President David Yagerman
First VP Al Evans
Second VP Gary Forster
Treasurer Lu Kernahan
Corresponding Secretary Sylvia Johnson
(Acting) Recording Secretary Sylvia Johnson

WORTHWHILE WEB SEARCH

A new section in the Foft newsletter is the Worthwhile Web search. It’s purpose it to highlight a subject that would take too much space in the newsletter to properly share the information. In this issue, we highlight the good work done by the New York Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance. Their work allows more and more of the New York City waterfront to be opened to the public for enjoyment and education. Visit their website to learn more.—Pat Riot

http://www.waterfrontalliance.org/

Mission Statement

The Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance works to transform the New York and New Jersey Harbor and Waterways to make them cleaner and more accessible, a vibrant place to play, learn and work with great parks, great jobs and great transportation for all.
Governors Island - It's a park too!

Originally known as “Paggank” island (meaning “nut island”) by the Native American Indians, Governors Island has become a public park. Located between lower Manhattan and Brooklyn, this 172 acre island holds a unique place in New York City history.

The current name was made official in 1784 as the British used the island as a military base for the exclusive use of New York’s royal governor. The governor’s house (ca 1703) survives today and is the oldest structure on the island. The island served as a US Army base from 1783 to 1966 and a US Coast Guard operations base from 1966 until 1996. Physically, the island became larger in the early 20th century as excavated dirt and rock from the Lexington Avenue subway was deposited on the south side of the island. This increased the size of the island by 103 acres. In 2003 150 acres were transferred to the State of New York for one dollar. The other 22 acres were transferred to the United States Department of the Interior as the Governors Island National Monument, administered by the National Park Service. The transfer of land prohibited the construction of any permanent housing or casinos.

On May 24, 2012, Mayor Michael Bloomberg broke ground on the new park and public space and announced the opening of the rehabilitated Castle Williams. Approximately 92 acres is open to the public and accessible via free ferries from Brooklyn and Manhattan. A walk around the perimeter of the island offers fantastic views of lower Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Statue of Liberty. Additional information can be found at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governors_Island

Friends of Fort Totten — Corporate Sponsors

Cord Meyer Development Corporation— Platinum Sponsor
BJ’s College Point—Platinum Sponsor
Whole Foods Market / Mahhasset Gold Sponsor

Events Calendar

Event: Back to School Festival
Date: Saturday, September 8
Time: 12 pm – 3 pm
Location: Little Bay Park
Description: Summer’s not over. Beat the stress of returning to school with an afternoon of fun activities including games, rides, craft projects, and free giveaways.

Event: Halloween Festival
Date: Saturday, October 20 (raindate: October 21)
Time: 12 noon – 3:00 pm
Location: Fort Totten - Parade Grounds
Description: Join us for a free day of spooky family fun. Games, rides, craft projects, costume contest, hay rides, pumpkin patch and goodie bags.

Event: Haunted Lantern Tours
Date: October 26 & 27
Time: 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Location: Fort Totten—The Battery
Description: Join the Urban Park Rangers as they mix history with Halloween on a lantern tour of the historic Water Battery at Fort Totten. This tour is not for the faint of heart. Ghouls and Goblins pop out from dark corners. Be warned.

You must be on line by 8:15 pm to be guaranteed admittance.

Event: Crafty Totten Kids
Date: Saturday/September 29th & Saturday/October 13th.
Time: 10:30/12 noon
Location: The Chapel on the Fort
Description: Hand made craft classes for children ages 4–11.

Stories, Email, comments and suggestions can be Emailed to

FriendsOfFortTottenParks@yahoo.com

2012 FRIENDS OF FORT TOTTEN PARKS DONOR

Please join us in shaping the future of Fort Totten Parks by making a donation.

Name________________ Address________________ City/State_________ Zipcode_____

E-Mail Address________________ (for notices, updates & events)

Are you interested in volunteering with the Friends of Fort Totten? Yes___ No___

Please make checks payable to—Friends of Fort Totten Parks, PO Box 604984, Bayside, NY 11360

Page eight www.FortTottenParks.org