Friends of Fort Totten Events—2012

Family Fun Day
Saturday June 16  12—3 pm
Join us for a fun filled day of free entertainment on the parade grounds. Face painting, inflatable rides, story telling, and a variety of games and events. Pack a picnic and wear comfy shoes!

Halloween events
Halloween/ October 20, 2012
12—3 pm  Rain date Oct 21
Haunted Lantern Tours October 26 & 27
6:30 —8:30 PM
A howling good time

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 inside 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.
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 Cord Meyer Company. — Pat Riot

The Cord Meyer Development Company has played a major part in the development of many areas in Queens and elsewhere over the years. They are still a major development company today.

The family real estate firm was originally structured as a partnership with Cord’s brothers, Christian and John, holding equal shares. In 1899, the partnership became a corporation: The Cord Meyer Company.

As the Twentieth Century began, they pursued a mutual interest in real estate. They acquired a substantial parcel of land in the Hopedale section of Whitestop, designed street layouts, introduced utilities, and built single family homes. Schools and shopkeepers soon followed, and as time unfolded, Cord named his town "Forest Hills." The creation of Forest Hills marked the advent of Cord Meyer Development Company, which was incorporated in December of 1904 with Cord Meyer, Jr. as its first president.

When The "City of the Future" was built at the 1939 World’s Fair in New York, the Cord Meyer Company had already been serving the people of Queens for over forty years, and the Meyer family had been an integral part of the community life for almost a century.

By the early 1890's, Cord Meyer, Jr. had recognized that Queens would not remain a rural outpost or the limited preserve of a few wealthy landholders. He envisioned a vital, growing neighborhood with homes, schools, shops, and services. As a result, he purchased a farm in Newtown from Samuel Lord, co-founder of Lord & Taylor, and renamed the area Elmhurst. He laid out subdivisions and streets, installed sewers, and established trolley connections. The area prospered and inspired similar growth in the adjoining

More recent developments include the Seminole and Balfour Apartments built in 1951 and 1957 respectively, the Continental and Forester Apartments erected in 1962 and 1965, and the Forest Hills Apartments completed in 1967. In the 1980s, the Company was well positioned to take advantage of the shift in the real estate market toward individual apartment ownership, and began the successful conversion of its apartment buildings into "co-ops".

The company's current projects include the renovation and renewal of several retail and mixed-use properties. Through these residential buildings and others, Cord Meyer Development Company contributes to the Greater New York Metropolitan Area as a stabilizing force in times of rapid change through decade upon decade of growth and prosperity.
Nature Corner

The Canada Goose seems to be a controversial bird. Loved by some and despised by others this handsome bird was thought almost extinct until a small gaggle of geese was found in Minnesota in 1962. These days, geese are considered pests by some.

Originally a migratory bird, the Canada Goose has become less of a seasonal traveler, these days preferring to save on all that flying to remain local and eat local foods. Some geese still migrate beginning in September & November to distant areas where some flocks only “migrate” from Little Neck Bay to the Clearview Golf course at night.

If you’ve ever seen a flock flying overhead either to or from their day time habitats and admired how they stay in such close formation and honk as they zoom overhead, you’ll see why they are admired. They are a graceful bird to watch and always bring a smile to my face reminding me spring or winter is on the way. A very family minded bird, mother goose will tend to chicks and defend them with her life. Geese are monogamous and generally mate for life. They are primarily herbivores although they will eat small insects and fish on occasion. Grass and grains are what geese really like to eat though. This is where those who aren’t so fond of geese have a word. Greatly increased flocks of geese are blamed in causing an increase in fecal coliforms at golf course, beaches and shorelines. Besides being a smelly problem, the goose droppings are causing increased bacteria blooms in local waterways. Eating the grass and leaving behind a smelly reminder isn’t the best way for a goose to be remembered. The goose was soon to be cooked.

In 1995 a US Air Force aircraft crossed paths with a flock of geese on takeoff which resulted in the loss of the airplane and loss of the entire crew. The accident sparked efforts to avoid future such accidents. Herding, relocation, culling and habitat modifications were employed. Even with increased awareness of the dangers, a US Airways passenger aircraft suffered a total power lost after take off from LaGuardia Airport when they collided with a flock of geese on January 15, 2009. Fortunately the veteran pilot brought the aircraft to an emergency landing in the Hudson River. Minor injuries were reported by the 155 passengers and crew.

Mention the Brooklyn Navy Yard to any New Yorker and you’ll get a variety of responses. Sold by the Lenape Indians to the Dutch in 1637 and later acquired by the US NAVY, the yard served as the US Navy’s flagship building facility from 1801 to 1966. The yard built many significant vessels during its heyday including the USS ARIZONA, launched in 1916 in the waters just north of the Brooklyn Bridge. The USS MAINE and the USS MISSOURI were also built at the yard.

Fast forward to November 11, 2011 and the Navy Yard opened as one of the newest museums in New York City. Located at 63 Flushing Avenue in Brooklyn, right along the shorelines of the East River where those famous battleships and countless other military craft were launched.

Ship models, full sized anchors and artifacts from the USS ARIZONA, sunk at Pearl Harbor in 1941 are all on display.

Directions, tours schedules, costs & exhibitions currently on display can be found on the Navy Yard’s website http://bldg92.org/visit/
Ian Ference - Photographer

Based in Brooklyn, New York—Ian Ference photographs a variety of subject matter but is particularly well versed in capturing architectural interiors.

Of special interest to the Friends of Fort Totten is the photo shoot Ian did of the Army Hospital on Fort Totten. Photographs of missing floors & dormitory rooms—some intact and others worn by time and weather.

His photography is thought provoking and offers a look into the past of once great buildings and locations. The photographs of the Army Hospital on Fort Totten as well as many other areas, including nearby Hart Island (see FOFT newsletter issue # vol 2 issue 2 & vol 3 issue 1) are listed on a blog he maintains known as the Kingston Lounge. It’s worth a visit to view areas one might never have known existed or would ever have a chance to visit.


Photo credit is given when known. Other photos used are from the internet and believed to be in the public domain. Please notify us if otherwise and we will either attribute credit or remove the photo. - Ed.

---

Photography Contest Rules

Continued from page one

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 make 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 re label 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.

---

The Bay Terrace Center of the Samuel Field Y
212-00 23rd Avenue, Bayside, NY  (718) 423-6111
- Pool & Tennis Center - Senior Swim
- Nursery & Not Quite Nursery School
- FREE Universal Pre-K
- After School Day Care - SAT Classes
After School Programs & Skilled Social Groups for Children With Learning Disabilities, ADHD and Mild Autistic Spectrum Disorders—Visit our website www.sfy.org
Come see for yourself why we’re known as “The Everybody Place.”
General George Washington’s Personal Flag

At Valley Forge, General George Washington flew his personal flag outside his headquarters to signify his presence there. In addition, a small unit of handpicked men who were tasked with protecting the General also flew this flag (maybe the beginnings of the Secret Service?). This unit was named the “Life Guard”.

An almost square blue flag with 13 six pointed stars (one for each of the colonies), it is believed to be the basis of our current day field of stars in our stars and stripes national flag and the Union Jack * flown on all US Navy vessels. * (see FOFT newsletter Issue 2 Vol 6)

---

The Friends of Fort Totten Parks Newsletter Committee

Contributing Editors
Lily Louis
Pat Riot

Contributing Writers & Research
Ryan Stevens
Lu Kernahan
Janice Melnick
Al Evans

Advertising
Sylvia Johnson

---

New Website Design

Regular visitors to the Friends of Fort Totten Parks website will notice a more streamlined webpage. This is due to the re-design of the website by our former graphic artist, Stephanie Louis. (Thanks Steph!)

We will update this page as often as needed or at times when weather changes scheduled events.

Medal of Honor for George Washington

There is currently an effort to have the Medal of Honor awarded to our first President.

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.

Tune in to our next issue for a more detailed story on the effort.

Stories, Email, comments and suggestions can be Emailed to

FriendsOfFortTottenParks@yahoo.com

---

Steven B. Drellich
Attorney at Law
Tel 718-279-7555
Fax 718-279-8154

BRUCE MONTAGUE
& PARTNERS
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

212 45 26th Avenue, Suite#7, Bayside, NY 11360
www.montaguelaw.com email: sdrelich@montaguelaw.com
The Spirit of 76

One of the most recognized paintings in the United States is that of three men marching proudly playing a fife and keeping count with drums. Known as the “Spirit of 76” or “Yankee Doodle” it was painted by Archibald MacNeal Willard (1836–1918). Willard was raised in Beford, Ohio and joined the 86th Ohio Infantry in 1863 where he fought in the Civil War. During his service he painted several scenes from the War. He painted the Spirit of 76 after he saw a parade pass through the town of Wellington Ohio. He also painted a few variations of the original even using his father as the middle character in the painting. One of the original paintings presently hangs at the US State Department in Washington D.C.

Willard is buried in Wellington, Ohio and his painting serves as an inspiration of the American Spirit.—Pat Riot

Fishing line proves deadly to birds

A recent article in the NY Times* brought to light a serious issue threatening birds along waterways in our area: discarded fishing line. Left behind by sport fisherman, mono filament fishing line is life-threatening danger to most, if not all waterfowl and area birds as well as fish, turtles and coastal mammals.

Left behind because it was snagged on a tree limb or a rock below the surface, mono filament line entangles fowl, fish and mammal alike causing them fatal harm. Hooks left with a little bait on them are nibbled by coastal animals potentially snagging them. Swans, seagulls and osprey have all fallen victim to the leftover fishing line left behind as well as fish and mammals. Some are rescued by Parks Department personnel and good Samaritans but others perish.

In an effort to stem and reverse the problem at hand, the Prospect Park Alliance has posted thirty signs around the park highlighting the proper disposal of fishing lines and hooks. They feel its an educational quest they have embarked on to reduce the number of injuries to wildlife. In addition, one solution is to have dedicated mono filament and fishing hook disposal receptacles that are maintained by local fishing clubs.

* NY Times 12/15/11 section A page 33
The Battle of Long Island
The Battle Begins

It’s July, and the Phoenix and the Rose have sailed up the Verrazano toward the Hudson River. Cannon fire erupts from both the English and Americans...and the Phoenix and the Rose have arrived in Tarrytown and set anchor. In doing so, they made significant progress toward cutting off American supplies and gaining Loyalist support.

By August 12th, 1776, another forty five English ships had arrived with more troops. Within a week, additional Hessian troops arrived bringing the total forces to over thirty two thousand strong, with over four hundred ships. Imagine thirty-two thousand troops and four-hundred ships anchored off the shore of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn! Because General Washington was unsure of where the British would attack, he split his army in half, stationing half on Manhattan and the other on Long Island—on the coast of what is now Gravesend Bay.

In the early morning hours of August 22nd, four thousand Hessian and British soldiers landed on Denyse’s Ferry (a high ground area in what is now the Narrows and Bay Ridge Brooklyn areas) Denyse’s Ferry was an artillery position, maintained by the Americans, and was heavily bombarded by the British ships before the Battle of Long Island. By noon, fifteen thousand soldiers and 40 pieces of artillery had appeared at Denyse’s Ferry. Loyalists greeted the British, as American troops fell back to what is now Flatbush, choosing not to engage the advancing army.

Washington received information—inaccurate information it turned-out—that only eight to nine thousand troops had landed at Denyse’s Ferry Landing so he sent only fifteen hundred more soldiers to Brooklyn. This gave the Americans’ a total of six thousand soldiers to fight a fifteen thousand strong British army.

By August 24th, the British forces totaled twenty thousand. Washington’s strategy was to use the natural geography as a defense to pick off the British as they made their way to Manhattan. Meanwhile, General William Howe, of the British forces, learned of an undefended path through Jamaica and decided to out flank the Americans from that side. British forces marched through the night (an unusual practice in those days) and a frontal assault was made ready to occupy the Americans from the front line.

Continued on page eight

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
Recording Secretary Matt Crick

FORT TOTTEN PARK FACT

Samuel Colt (1814—1862) of Colt revolver fame was instrumental in developing underwater electrical cables used at Fort Totten used to detonate underwater mines guarding the entrance to the East River from Long Island Sound. Colt developed the cable and detonator with Samuel F.B. Morse (of Morse code fame)

The use of the remote detonation devices was the first time a remote control explosion could be fired by military personnel on shore.
On August 27th, the British attacked the American defenses in what is now known as Gowanus Heights. Howe was an experienced strategist and attacked from the rear of the American defenses and as well as the flank. Many American soldiers panicked, but a tough stand taken by four-hundred Maryland troops prevented the American Soldiers from being captured. Washington then removed those remaining troops to the Manhattan camp. Eventually, Washington would be driven to New Jersey and into Pennsylvania. The American army had suffered some of the largest losses to date with about 300 men killed and over 1,000 captured.
- Ryan Stevens

Events Calendar

Date: Saturday April 22
Event: Bayside Anglers Waterfront Day / Shoreline Clean-up
Time: 9 am
Location: Joe Michaels Mile, Bayside Marina, Little Bay Park
Description: Spring clean up of Little Neck Bay shoreline—See website for more details www.BaysideAnglers.com

Date: Saturday, June 16
Event: Friends of Fort Totten Parks’ Family Fun Day
Time: 12 noon – 3 pm
Location: Fort Totten Park Parade Grounds
Description: Please join us for a fun afternoon of free activities including games, crafts, rides, give aways, community groups, medical screenings, pet micro chipping & adoptions and more.

Date: Saturday, August 2
Event: Shakespeare’s “Comedy of Errors”
Time: 7 pm
Location: Fort Totten Park (Gazebo Area)
Description: The Hip to Hip Theatre Company presents this sidesplitting farce about two sets of identical twins, separated at birth, who unknowingly end up in the same place at the same time. Please bring a blanket, chair. Sponsored by Cord Meyer Development Corporation.

Date: Saturday, September 8
Event: Back to School Festival
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.

Date: Saturday, October 20*
Event: Halloween Festival
Time: 12 noon – 3:00 pm
Location: Fort Totten Park Parade Grounds
Description: Join us for a free day of spooky family fun. Games, rides, crafts, costume contest, hay rides, pumpkin patch and goodie bags.
Date: October 26 & 27
Event: Haunted Lantern Tours
Time: 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Location: Fort Totten Park
Description: Join the Urban Park Rangers as they mix history with Halloween on a lantern tour of the historic Water Battery at Fort Totten. You must be on line by 8:15 pm to be guaranteed admittance.