



VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

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Spring 2022

Jackson Heights
Beautification Group

www.JHBG.org

Jackson Heights – “A Garden in the City”

Jackson Heights Celebrates the Arts this Spring!



Arts & Culture in Jackson Heights

Student Artists of Tomorrow!
One of the murals welcoming the community to PS280.



IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message	2
Editor's Message	2
Spring Arts Events in JH	3
JH Art Talks Return!	3
Seeing Art in Our World	3
The Arts in JH Public Schools	4
En español	6
Prairie Garden at St. Mark's	8
Poetry at St. Mark's	8
Art Retail Therapy Opens	9
JH Notables: Alfred Butts	9
Our Urban Ecosystem	10
Wild Sightings in JH	11
Let's Green Queens	11
Ongoing Events	12
Membership Form	12
On the cover: Art by Kirsten Magnani	

President's Message

BY LESLIE ELLMAN



Happy New Year, Neighbors! As we begin a new year, we always make plans and hope for the best. Art has been one of the main things helping us during challenging times and delighting us at all times. The JHBG runs several art programs such as The Jackson Heights Orchestra, Summer Sundays in the Park, and The Children's Art Contest open to students in our local public schools. Our Historic Weekend tours celebrate the architecture of our neighborhood, and we are proud to be fiscal sponsors for individual artists and arts programs such as JH Art Talks and En Construcción. We embrace this role because we believe in the power and importance of art in making life more beautiful and meaningful.

Leslie Ellman, President

En español • páginas 6–7

Editor's Message

Creating and Imagining in 2022 BY MELISSA ZAVALA

With the start of a new year, we are renewed by early signs of spring, emerging plant life offering new hope for positive changes ahead. The uncertainty of an adaptable virus continues to shape our world this new year. The strains this has placed on us have turned many towards the healing power of the arts and to the restorative efforts of creating—from things to food—as a way of developing old and new skills. This issue thus reviews the state of the arts in our neighborhood, taught in our local schools to children from a young age, and available to the rest of us via different programs free of cost. We highlight some of those programs in this edition.

In a special article for this issue, Kirsten Magnani, JHBG's Artist-in-Residence, offers a sense of the ways in which art is found in small details in our urban surroundings. A textile designer, environmental motifs inspire her designs. This year,

we are also introducing a new feature in our quarterly issues: a gardening advice column promoting the use of native plant species for the invaluable improvements they represent for the city. We hope to inspire gardeners to introduce more of the beautiful wild species native to our region in spaces under their care.

We appreciate your support, and we are always glad to hear from you. Please send us your suggestions for stories, articles, and any other thoughts on how we can better serve you by emailing us at info@jhb.org or writing to us by mail at JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.

Happy Spring!

Melissa Zavala, Editor



SPRING ARTS EVENTS IN JACKSON HEIGHTS



Wed. March 9

Jackson Heights Orchestra Concert

St. Mark's Episcopal Church 33-50 82nd St., 7:30 p.m. Free with a suggested donation of \$20 and \$10 for students and seniors. Music by Copland, Honegger, and Mozart. Mask and proof of vaccination required at the door.

Wed. March 16

Red Door Poetry Series: COVID Remembrance by Alice Quinn

St. Mark's Episcopal Church on 34th Avenue, between 81st and 82nd Streets 6:30 p.m.

Sat. April 2nd In-person readings

(in Spanish) by authors of *En Construcción* at

the bookstore. *Libreria Barco de Papel*, 40-03 80th Street. 5:00 p.m.

Wed. April 6

National Poetry Month Celebration

part of the Red Door Poetry Series at St. Mark's Episcopal Church on 34th Avenue, between 81st and 82nd Streets. 12 o'clock

Wed. April 13 JH Art Talks

(see below) Espresso 77 or on Zoom. 35-57 77th St.

Sat. May 7th In-person readings

(in Spanish) by authors of *En Construcción* at the bookstore, *Libreria Barco de Papel*, 40-03 80th Street. 5:00 p.m.

JH Art Talks Return!

BY LINDA GANJIAN

The new season of JH Art Talks begins on April 13 at Espresso 77 (or on Zoom pending public health guidance). Talks are planned for the second Wednesday in April, May, and June, as well as September until November. A diverse group of local artists, representing a range of media, will be invited to present recent projects, and participate in a Q&A.

Our mission is to celebrate the wealth of artistic talent in Queens by giving artists a platform to present their work to their community. Since its inception in 2016, 65 works have been featured over 40 events.

The 2022 season will be curated by Linda Ganjian, Stephanie Beck, Deborah Wasserman, and Paul Krause.

For more information, or to sign up for our mailing list at

jharttalks.com



Seeing Art in Our World

BY KIRSTEN MAGNANI



Why do we make art? Are we inspired by beauty, by something disturbing, or by an emotion that we need to share? The reasons and possibilities are endless ... Sometimes the reason is unclear. We just know we have to and love to. It is an opportunity to explore ideas, take risks and discover what one is capable of.

The images we create are products of who we are at a particular moment in time and in a given environment. They incorporate our life experiences. Everyone has a story to tell. Mine includes a father who practiced architecture and urban planning, a mother who sculpted, a career in textile surface design, and a childhood growing up in Jackson Heights and spending

many summers in the Highlands of Scotland. Our life experiences influence how we observe our surroundings: I notice buildings, cities, colors, patterns, and nature.

The cover art for this newsletter portrays the idea of making art. I wondered, how am I going to convey this? I started by walking around the neighborhood, observing and noting things of interest. I had an Aha! moment: use details from the buildings to create a fanciful world. I collected references and orchestrated all the parts to create a composition of drawings, colors, textures, and experimented with scale to connect them all. Throughout this process, it was essential to stop, step away and study the composition as a whole, to see what worked and what didn't. During this process there

is always an *ugly* stage that offers an opportunity to improve, to take risks, try something new, and to get out of one's comfort zone.

I want my images to encourage people to look at our neighborhood and city anew, to see details they may have missed, such as the beautiful architectural brick and stonework. Much thought and skill went into these designs often found high up and out of our line of sight. I hope the art in this newsletter brings them up close in a whimsical way. Every detail may be found in Jackson Heights. Do you recognize the creatures holding the paintbrush? Do you know where the main building is? The location of the diamond pattern in the colorful mural? I've depicted these objects in a new way showing how art can enrich our lives. Please, enjoy.

STATE OF THE ARTS IN JACKSON HEIGHTS: Public-School Students Create

BY MELISSA ZAVALA



Studio in a School partners with at least two of our local schools to teach students the fundamentals of visual art from an early age. This artwork was made by three-year-old students.

Music, theater, dance, and visual arts offer a variety of skills. From collaboration, to creativity, discipline and focus, arts education in its different forms teach learners important skills about themselves and their communities, enhancing connections between history and cultures. Given these lifelong benefits, we explore the state of arts education in our neighborhood. This past fiscal year is the first time public schools received full funding from the city and the state, along with federal support. Prior to this, gaps in school budgets meant schools had to seek funding from different sources for supplies to instruction. With funding now available, how can art enhance our local school curricula? Schools are listed east to west, from K-5, including the single charter school, followed by the two intermediate schools in the area.

PS280 Home of the Lion Hearts

34-20 94th Street

Emphasizing academics and providing a supportive instructional community, PS280 has a vibrant arts program with a dedicated visual arts teacher, Ms. Alba, and a full-time music teacher, Ms. Dardano. Additionally, PS280 has a theater program for 4th graders after school.



standards followed by city and state set in 2004 and 2005 (for art and music, along with dance and theater, respectively). This plan sets benchmarks for a standardized

curriculum in the arts. In conjunction with their use of the SPARK program, PS222 follows 10 dynamic instructional units encouraging research-based, lifelong learning.

The acronym stands for Student Partnerships for

Advanced Research and Knowledge, an approach based on mentoring and student collaboration using inquiry-based methods. These approaches are tied together through their Schoolwide Enrichment program (SEM), which is a research-supported educational model encouraging students to engage in individual research.

PS149 The Christa McAuliffe School

93-11 34th Avenue

Students K-5 at PS149 study under Ms. Esparzamestres, a beloved art teacher who goes out of her way to inspire, and mentors the school's Art Club during school hours. PS149 also has two music teachers, a band, and chorus program. The Principal, Ms. Hernandez, is a wholehearted supporter of arts education.

PS222 Firefighter Christopher Santora School: Early Childhood Magnet School of Exploration

86-15 37th Avenue

Since its inception in 2002 as a small school with grades PreK-2, PS222 has garnered recognition for its strong curriculum and its robust arts program including theater as well as music and visual arts, all based in the Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts, a set of

The Renaissance Charter School

35-59 81st Street

Dating back to 1993, Renaissance School resulted from an effort to reform the public school system through collaboration and community building between teachers, parents, and the neighborhood. Small by design with PreK-12 grades totaling just over 600 students in one building, this school is among the most successful charter schools in the city. It offers a three-tiered curriculum based in core studies, experiential learning, and community service. Students receive ➡



instruction in creative dance; drama; vocal and instrumental music; and visual art. By grades 7-9, students choose an art field to specialize in though art instruction is woven overall into the curriculum as a way of knowing and learning. In partnership with various arts organizations from Queens Council on the Arts, The Metropolitan Opera Guild, State Council on the Arts, and many others, students are connected more directly to the art world throughout the city. Student creativity and hard work is promoted during "Rensizzle Week", a highlight each year, when the school community showcases independent studies completed in partnership with varying organizations selected for their unique expertise. Their brand of experiential learning inculcates a sense of the importance of social justice, service, and creativity in students' lives and academic work.

PS212

34-25 82nd Street

Beyond a strong academic program, PS212 educators and administrators understand the arts as integral to their curriculum. In visual arts, students are taught to "Think like Artists", fostering creativity. Music instruction parallels literacy education, deepening students' analytical skills, while also promoting music appreciation. In partnership with the organizations like Studio in a School, NYC Ballet, Arts Connection, Flamenco Vivo, CUNY CAT, Joyce Theater, Carnegie Hall, and others, their arts educators nurture emotional development under Mrs. Picard and Ms. Segarra in art and music respectively.



PS069 The Jackson Heights School of Cultural and Performing Arts

77-02 37th Avenue

With a rich music program developed over several years, students from PreK through 5th grade rely upon the Kodály technique of teaching music through folk songs and games to develop singing voices early on. As they age, students join the school orchestra or their award-winning choir. Instruction happens once a week. Visual arts develop students' fine-motor coordination using explorations of basic elements like lines and surfaces, with work performed independently or cooperatively. The school's art curriculum ties studies



Second graders play with concepts of light and shadow using black and white shapes to understand some of the abstract principles of contrasts.



of geography, history, and explorations of nature and culture with the arts.

PS398 The Hector Figueroa School

69-01 34th Avenue

The newest school in the neighborhood, PS398 currently houses grades 3K-2. It provides all students with music instruction once a week by Mr. Wettstein, a creative teacher who uses songs from the diverse population's cultural traditions to train students in singing and basic instruments. The school will be partnering with Teatro SEA (Society for the Educational Arts, Inc.) to establish a dance residency and is currently partnering with Studio in a School. This organization formed following the fiscal crisis in 1977 when budgets were cut throughout city schools. Philanthropist Agnes Gund founded this initiative to bring art professionals to classrooms in 10-week cycles to promote arts learning.

IS145 Joseph Pulitzer Magnet School of Innovation and Applied Learning

33-34 80th Street

Two years ago, IS145 opened a Makerspace for students and faculty. Partnering with BEAM Center in Brooklyn, students create, explore, and learn collaboratively from STEM-based projects. Both low- and high-tech tools are available along with art supplies and other materials useful to builders. Preparing 21st century student makers with practical skills in various fields from science and technology to engineering and math (i.e., STEM fields) is the school's main goal, as is fostering entrepreneurship. This school has two art teachers, one for dance, and two for music (for band and choir). There is an active Art

Club that meets two days a week as well as after-school programs in dance, band, and choir. Led by Ms. Asin, IS145 students have participated in JHBG's annual Art Contest. A drama program was initiated just as the pandemic struck but a musical is in the works for this spring.



IS230 73-10 34th Avenue

For grades 6-8, IS230 provides students three years of band and chorus as well as visual arts instruction in preparation for competitive arts High Schools. With three classes a week, this middle school also offers students access to art exhibitions, concerts, city-wide festivals, parades, and more.

School bands and choirs have been unable to rehearse since congregating together entails risks of contagion. With young students increasingly suffering from depression resulting from isolation and interruptions to daily life, providing them with the therapeutic effects of artistic expression is vital. Let's ensure the growth of these invaluable programs and connect our students to this creative community to inspire tomorrow's artists. Contact District 30 Superintendent, Dr. Philip Composto, to express your support for continued generous arts funding at (718) 391-8323. Become involved in your School Leadership Team (SLT) and support efforts by the Community Education Council (CEC) to ensure that arts programming is not undercut by prioritizing English/Language Arts and Math only. The arts matter now more than ever.

Mensaje de la Presidenta

POR LESLIE ELLMAN



¡Feliz año nuevo, vecinos! Al comenzar un nuevo año, siempre hacemos planes y esperamos lo mejor. El arte ha sido una de las muchas cosas que nos han ayudado durante tiempos difíciles y siempre nos ha seducido. El JHBG organiza varios programas artísticos, como la Orquesta de Jackson Heights, los Domingos de verano en el parque y el Concurso de arte para niños. Nuestros recorridos del fin de semana histórico celebran la arquitectura del vecindario. Estamos orgullosos de ser patrocinadores de artistas y de programas artísticos como las charlas sobre arte "JH Art Talks" y "En Construcción". Asumimos este papel porque creemos en el poder y la importancia del arte en la transformación de la vida en algo más bello y significativo.

Mensaje de la Editora. Crear e imaginar en el 2022

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

Con el inicio del nuevo año, nos renovamos con las tempranas señales de la primavera, esa emergencia de la vida en las plantas que ofrece nueva esperanza ante los cambios positivos. Por eso, este número revisa el estado de las artes en nuestro vecindario, impartidas en nuestras escuelas a los niños desde temprana edad y disponible al resto de nosotros a través de diferentes programas gratuitos. En esta edición



destacamos algunos de esos programas. Este año, vamos también a introducir un nuevo elemento en los números trimestrales: una columna de consejos sobre jardinería para promover el uso de especies de plantas nativas por las invaluables mejoras que representan para la ciudad. Por favor, envíanos sugerencias sobre historias, artículos o cualquier otra idea sobre cómo podemos servirte mejor a info@jhb.org o escríbenos por correo a **JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.**

Las charlas sobre arte "JH Art Talks" regresan

POR LINDA GANJIAN

La nueva temporada de "JH Art Talks" comienza el 13 de abril en Espresso 77 (o vía Zoom, dependiendo de las recomendaciones sobre salud pública). Las charlas están planeadas para el segundo miércoles de abril a junio y de septiembre a noviembre. Nuestra misión es celebrar la riqueza de talento artístico en Queens proporcionando a los artistas una plataforma para mostrar su trabajo a la comunidad. La temporada 2022 será curada por Linda Ganjian, Stephanie Beck, Deborah Wasserman y Paul Krause. Para más información o para inscribirse a nuestra lista de contactos visita el sitio jharttalks.com

Los destacados de Jackson Heights. El lugar de nacimiento del Scrabble: Alfred Mosher Butts

POR DANIEL KARATZAS

Es uno de los juegos de mesa más populares y mejor conocidos en el mundo, y fue creado por un residente de Jackson Heights. Se trata del



Una de las presentaciones en persona del año pasado de la serie "JH Arts Talks" celebrando artistas locales y cultivando comunidad.

juego de mesa Scrabble. Su inventor, Alfred Mosher Butts, fue un arquitecto que perdió su trabajo durante la Gran Depresión. Vivió en la Calle 79, en el edificio Hampton Court, y fue parroquiano de la Iglesia Metodista Comunidad Unidad de la Avenida 35. A principios de la década de 1930 desarrolló el juego basado en su anterior juego de palabras, Lexiko. Probó su nuevo juego usando a sus co-parroquianos en el salón social del sótano de la iglesia. Butts lanzó el juego en 1938 como Criss-Crosswords, pero las ventas fueron pésimas. Sin embargo, tras sucesivos cambios y distintos compradores, el juego ha llegado a más de 100 países en 30 idiomas, y se estima que se han vendido más de 150 millones en los últimos 70 años. Por algún tiempo, el JHBG ha patrocinado un club en la iglesia donde el juego fue inventado. Después de muchos años de vivir en Jackson Heights, Alfred Butts se jubiló en su pueblo natal Poughkeepsie, Nueva York, donde murió en 1993.

Ver el arte en nuestro mundo

POR KIRSTEN MAGNANI

¿Por qué hacemos arte?

Seguramente nos inspira la belleza, algo inquietante o alguna emoción, que necesitamos compartir. Las razones son incontables, pero también las posibilidades. Solo sabemos qué hay que hacerlo, y nos encanta. Es una oportunidad para explorar ideas, tomar riesgos y descubrir de lo que uno es capaz. La pieza para la portada de este número necesitaba retratar la idea de "hacer arte". Me pregunté, "¿cómo voy a hacerlo?" Empecé caminando en el vecindario, observando y notando cosas de interés. Tuve una intuición: usaría detalles de los edificios para crear un mundo imaginario. Espero motivar a la gente mediante las imágenes que creé para mirar nuestro vecindario y la ciudad de forma diferente. Cada detalle pertenece a Jackson Heights. Por favor, disfrútalo!

La poesía y la meditación ofrecen paz en la Iglesia de San Mark

POR SPENCER REECE

Octubre de 2020 marca el comienzo de la Serie Red Door. La iglesia había estado cerrada por siete meses debido a la pandemia y a la muerte del Padre Checo a causa del

COVID-19. Fui invitado por la diócesis a venir de España a la Iglesia de San Mark como un sacerdote encargado provisionalmente. En Nueva York había la necesidad de un espacio para la meditación y la poesía, y yo quería abrir la iglesia tanto a miembros como a los peatones de la Calle 82. La serie consiste en la lectura de un poema por un poeta dos veces con cinco minutos de silencio entre ambas lecturas. Las lecturas se realizan cada primer y tercer miércoles del mes a las 6:30 p. m., excepto durante el verano. El 6 de abril la Iglesia de San Mark tendrá un evento de lectura de todo el día, con varios poetas, entre ellos Padraig O'Tuama, quien graba *Poetry Unbound* para el programa de radio *On Being*, de Krista Tippett.

Un jardín-pradera en la Iglesia Episcopal de San Mark

POR DAVID WATSON

El año pasado los jardineros de la Iglesia de San Mark crearon un jardín-pradera con plantas nativas. Este jardín crece ahora bajo un cerezo grande con una enorme rama horizontal afuera de la entrada principal de la iglesia. El proyecto fue un reto, porque carecía de un diseño firme. Su planeación requirió un nuevo acercamiento. Esta primavera, planeo agregar *Conoclinium coelestinum* (flores de niebla azul), *Phycanthemum multicum* (menta de montaña) y más *Asclepias tuberosa* (hierba de mariposa). Las especies que plantamos tienen profundos sistemas de raíces que no necesitan mucha agua, se extienden para llenar espacios vacíos, necesitan poco cuidado y mantienen a raya la maleza. El acercamiento a las plantas nativas hace la jardinería mucho más fácil.

Por favor, considera ayudar a la Iglesia de San Mark esta primavera, ven los sábados después de las 10:00 a. m. y pregunta a Dorothy Moran cómo puedes apoyar.

El estado de las artes en Jackson Heights: los estudiantes de escuelas públicas crean

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

La educación artística en sus diferentes formas enseña importantes habilidades sobre uno mismo y la comunidad e intensifica las conexiones entre historia y cultura. Dados estos beneficios permanentes, exploramos el estado de la educación artística en nuestro vecindario. Por primera vez, en el pasado año fiscal las escuelas públicas recibieron fondos completos de la ciudad y del estado, así como apoyo federal. Las escuelas están enlistadas de este a oeste, desde la preescolar K-5, incluyendo la única escuela concertada del vecindario, seguida por dos escuelas primarias en el área.

Nuestro ecosistema urbano. De afuera hacia adentro

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

El renombrado biólogo Edward O. Wilson falleció a finales de 2021. Conocido por su revolucionaria investigación sobre hormigas, su trabajo inspira la conservación comenzando por los más pequeños organismos y fundado en la *biofilia*, es decir, en la afinidad humana por la vida que nos une a otras especies. Los residentes de la ciudad que no tiene espacio para un jardín también son custodios de organismos grandes y pequeños. Una residente de Jackson Heights, Tanya, representa este tipo de

custodio del espacio interior. Autoidentificada como *Hoya Head* (Cabeza de hoyo), Tanya colecciona variedades del género *Hoya*, una planta asiática tropical que consta de entre 200 y 300 especies. Las pequeñas plantas de Tanya representan la bioética de Wilson: "El esplendor aguarda en proporciones diminutas" (Wilson, *Biophilia*, 1984: 139). ¿Qué ecosistemas urbanos te interesan? Ponte en contacto con nosotros en info@jhbhg.org o escríbenos por correo a **JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.**

Enverdecamos Queens.

¿Quieres hacer más para reducir el cambio climático? Aquí hay algunos consejos verdes para quien quiera hacer la diferencia.

¡Repáralo, no lo desheches!

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

Hoy en día, las cosas están hechas para romperse. Pero ¿si en vez de comprar más muebles desechables, zapatos o ropa nuevos, y más, reparamos los objetos viejos y rotos? ¿A dónde podemos llevar las cosas dañadas para que las arreglen? Tristemente, hay pocos reparadores por aquí, pero hay algunos a quienes vale la pena apoyar: tapicería (Corona Upholstery: 101-19 Northern Boulevard; [718] 429-6258), reparación de zapatos (Columbus Shoe Repair: 79-05 Avenida 37; [728] 205-7651), arreglos de ropa (Unit Cleaners: 77-05 Avenida 37; [718] 639-7049), reparación de electrodomésticos (Climate Crew Corp: 37-63 Calle 83, Suite 221; [347] 418-7804). ¿Qué soluciones ecológicas te gustaría promover? Escríbenos a info@jhbhg.org

o envíanos tus preguntas y comentarios por correo a **JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.**

¡Art Retail Therapy está aquí!

Después de haber perdido la antigua y querida papelería ubicada en la Avenida 37 con la Calle 82, Jackson Heights tiene una nueva tienda de productos para arte. Se encuentra en el 84-26 de la Avenida 37; su propietario, Francisco Cogollo, se está convirtiendo rápidamente en un excelente vecino, en especial para los artistas locales. Su tienda ofrece exposiciones de galería gratuitas y sesiones sobre arte por \$22, cada tercer lunes a las 7:00 p. m.; síguelos por Instagram, **[instagram.com/artretailtherapy](https://www.instagram.com/artretailtherapy)** antes de registrarte. Para más información, escribe a **artretailtherapy@gmail.com** o llama al (718) 406-9444.

Un espectáculo salvaje en Jackson Heights

Un estridente ruido que duró varias horas en los jardines de The Towers inquietó a los vecinos el día de Año Nuevo. Una cacofonía de graznidos de cuervos asesinos ahuyentaba a un búho de cuernos de rejilla. En Jackson Heights y los alrededores viven otras aves rapaces. Desde el halcón de cola roja (*Buteo jamaicensis*) hasta halcones peregrinos (*Falco peregrinus*) y cernícalos (*Falco sparverius*), las aves de rapiña han regresado. ¿Qué vida salvaje inusual has visto por el vecindario? Envíanos fotos y comparte tu historia enviando un email a **info@jhbhg.org** o escríbenos por correo a **JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.**

A Meadow Garden at St. Mark's Episcopal Church

BY DAVID WATSON



What was a traditional English garden at St. Mark's now contains a native prairie garden and other wilder spaces.

This past year, gardeners at St. Mark's created a meadow garden with native plants. This garden now grows below a large cherry tree with a gigantic horizontal branch (well-cabled to the vertical trunk) outside the church's main entrance. Visitors are welcome to 81st Street and 34th Avenue during open hours.

I had previously helped design a native plant area at The Towers following strict guidelines. The St. Mark's project was challenging because it lacked a firm design. Planning it required a fresh approach. Taking it piecemeal allowed me to avoid unnecessary expenses, as did using plants supplied by neighbors, friends, and others nearby.

Last spring, during a trip to see friends in Hudson-NY, they blessed me with a number of *Symphyotrichum lateriflorum*, or "Calico Asters," after I helped them with their gardening. This plant became the backbone for that area. I also moved some *Agastache foeniculum* (Anise Hyssop), over-planted in another garden area, which became ➡

Poetry and Meditation Offer Peace at St. Mark's

BY SPENCER REECE

October, 2020, marks the start of The Red Door Series. The church had been closed for seven months due to the pandemic and the death of Father Checo from COVID-19. I was invited by the diocese to come to Saint Mark's as an interim-priest-in-charge. Recently returned from a decade in Madrid, Spain, where I was working for the Spanish Episcopal Church as the canon-to-the-ordinary, I created the Unamuno Author Series which culminated in an international literary festival. In New York, there was a need for space for meditation and poetry. I wanted to open it to church members and anyone walking down 82nd Street. The series consists of a poet reading one poem twice with five minutes of silence in between readings. Those of other faiths, non-believers, and long-time Saint Mark's members sit in pews in silence and listen to poets read their poems. Readings are the first and third Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. We take summers off. The Red Door Series received media coverage and a major grant from the diocese for 2022. On April 6th Saint Mark's will have an all-day event of poets reading poems including the presence of Padraig O'Tuama who records *Poetry Unbound* for Krista Tippett's *On Being* radio program. Saint Mark's is resurrection. These poets plant their poems like seeds into the silence of Wednesday nights in Jackson Heights to spread hope. We're a Holy Spirit factory.



Poetry finds a home at St. Mark's under the leadership of Father Spencer, a poet, and new Priest-in-Charge.



A cone flower past its bloom still looks beautiful, offering something interesting at different times of the year.

essential. Dunolly Gardens also gave us "coneflower" plants, *Echinacea purpurea*. By the beginning of last autumn, most of these displayed beautiful flowers in a part-shaded area. The plant literature advises full sun for most, but they did well under the big cherry tree.

This spring, I plan to add *Conoclinium*

coelestinum (Blue Mist Flowers), *Pycnanthemum multicum* (Clustered Mountain Mint), and more *Asclepias tuberosa* (Butterfly Weed). The species we plant have deep root systems which do not need much watering, spread to fill up empty space, need little care, and keep weeds out. The native-plant approach makes gardening much easier.

Please consider helping at St. Mark's this spring. Arrive a little after 10:00 AM on a Saturday and ask Dorothy Moran how you can help. St. Mark's has other gardens beyond those described here.



Art Retail Therapy is Here!

After losing the beloved longtime stationery shop on 37th Avenue just off 82nd Street, Jackson Heights has a new art supplies store! Located at 84-26 37th Avenue, its owner, Francisco Cogollo, is quickly making an excellent neighbor, especially to local artists. He grew up in Elmhurst and has a real love for the neighborhood. Art Retail Therapy offers free gallery shows and \$22 art sessions every other Monday at 7 p.m. requiring registration. Follow them on Instagram at [instagram.com/artretailtherapy](https://www.instagram.com/artretailtherapy) for their class schedule before registering. Email them at artretailtherapy@gmail.com, or call (718) 406-9444 to find out more. Stop by and find ways of enhancing your creativity and greet our new neighbors!

JACKSON HEIGHTS NOTABLES

Highlighting former Jackson Heights residents of notable interest for the ways in which they represent our neighborhood.

Alfred Mosher Butts

The Birthplace of Scrabble BY DANIEL KARATZAS



The Community Methodist Church is where the popular game *Scrabble* was perfected by neighborhood parishioners, commemorated by the street sign on that corner.



It is one of the most popular and well-known board games in the world and was created by a Jackson Heights resident. That game is Scrabble. You may have seen the street sign honoring Scrabble at the southeast corner of 81st Street and 35th Avenue. The word Avenue is spelled out, and its letters, along with the "th" in 35th, have numerical sub-scripts indicating the value of each letter in Scrabble.

Scrabble's inventor, Alfred Mosher Butts, was an architect who lost his job during the Great Depression. He lived on 79th Street in Hampton Court and was a parishioner at the Community United Methodist Church on 35th Avenue. During the early 1930s he developed the game based on his earlier word game, Lexiko. He tested his new game using his fellow parishioners in the basement social room at Community Church. Butts launched the game in 1938 as Criss-Crosswords, and sales were dismal.

While the game was developed in the 1930s, it was not until the 1950s that Scrabble became a sensation. In 1948, after a decade of weak sales and unable to interest other game companies, Butts sold manufacturing rights to James Brunot, of Newtown, Connecticut. Brunot changed the name to Scrabble and granted Butts a royalty on each game sold. Sales were still low until 1952, when a Macy's executive who had played the game placed a substantial order. Unable to meet the sudden demand, Brunot sold the manufacturing rights to Selchow and Righter. The Macy's executive was prescient since by 1954, just two years later, over three million sets were sold.

Today, the game is marketed in over 100 countries in 30 languages, and it is estimated that over 150 million have been sold over the last 70 years. There are thousands of Scrabble clubs all over the world, and for a number of years the JHBG sponsored a club that met in the Community Church where the game was invented. After many years of living in Jackson Heights, Alfred Butts retired to his hometown of Poughkeepsie, New York, where he died in 1993.

VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

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**Jackson Heights
Beautification Group**
P.O. Box 720253
Jackson Heights, NY
11372-0235
(347) 766-9129
info@JHBG.org

Newsletter Committee

Edwin O'Keefe Westley
Jerry Goldman
Louise Mulvihill
Melissa Zavala
Rommel Alama
Kirsten Magnani

Design & Production
Rommel Alama

Distribution Director
Edwin O'Keefe Westley

Translator & En Español Editor

Julia Erika
Negrete Sandoval

Contributors

Leslie Ellman
Linda Gangian
Dan Karatzas
Kirsten Magnani
Spencer Reece
David Watson
Melissa Zavala

Arts & Culture in Jackson Heights

This warm scene is one of the growing number of colorful murals around the neighborhood. Found along 80th Street, this mural adorns The Queensboro Restaurant on Northern Boulevard.



OUR URBAN ECOSYSTEM

This ongoing series considers the impact of urban gardening and landscaping practices on city wildlife and open spaces—as well as indoor ones.

Bringing the Outdoors Indoors

BY MELISSA ZAVALA



Tiny plants make a home, providing warmth and beauty all year round.

Renowned biologist, Edward O. Wilson, passed away as 2021 ended. Known for his groundbreaking research on ants, his body of work inspires conservation beginning with the tiniest organisms and rooted in biophilia, the human affinity for life binding us to other species. Humans are ecosystem builders, not just destroyers. He reminds us that we can and should do more for our world. City residents without outdoor gardening space are also stewards of big and small organisms. Life-long resident of the neighborhood, Tanya, represents this type of indoor steward. A self-identified “Hoya Head”, she collects varieties of the genus *Hoya*, a tropical Asian plant consisting of 200-300 species. With waxy leaves, growing as vines or creepers, some with peduncles with fragrant star-shaped flowers smelling of chocolate Tootsie Rolls and others like cotton candy, Hoyas are diverse.

The pandemic prevented us from seeing others.

Stuck in the house, Tanya turned to plants. “Seeing something grow since we couldn’t see anyone,” she says, led her to grow her unique plant collection from “normal person 10 plants to 110”! Preferring tiny cuttings so she can “fit them all in”, she began watching YouTube videos and following Hoya



growers on Instagram, ordering plants in the mail. She has learned a great deal about their nutrient requirements, preferred moisture conditions, and lighting needs which she supplements with lamps and imaginative arrangements on her windows. She marvels at the idiosyncrasies of their make-up—from flat and fuzzy, to round and waxy leaves—to their personalities. With attention to aesthetics, she finds pots to fit their needs and her style, highlighting their beauty. She has come to terms with the insects that invariably come with plants and accepts her indoor environment as one requiring strict management so that life can thrive, giving up workspace to her plants. Plants not only add beauty but cleanse our indoor air and produce healthful emotional and psychological effects. Tanya’s tiny plants represent Wilson’s bioethics: “Splendor awaits in minute proportions” (Wilson’s *Biophilia*, 1984: 139).

What urban ecosystems interest you? Contact us at info@jhb.org, or via regular mail at **JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.**

Wild Sightings in Jackson Heights!

DOROTHY MAGNANI, DENNIS EDGE, & BARBARA MUTNICK REPORT

A raucous noise lasting several hours in the gardens at The Towers rattled neighbors on New Year's Day. Resident Barbara Mutnick said, "It's been like the Sharks and the Jets but between birds here in Jackson Heights!" likening the heated avian contest to sports rivalries. A cacophony of cawing by a murder of crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) intimidated a great horned owl out of the area. "I expected the owl to be murdered!!" said Dorothy Magnani. Great horned owls (*Bubo virginianus*) are



Crows work together to intimidate a visiting great horned owl at The Towers.

aggressive top food chain predators which prey on a variety of animals from rodents to rabbits, snakes, as well as young hawks and crows—motivating the crows to push this new raptor out. "So, I didn't have to worry about the owl ... the crows were the ones to be scared for," said Mrs. Magnani. Jackson Heights has several other birds of prey living here and nearby. From red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) to peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*), and American kestrels (*Falco sparverius*), raptors have made a comeback! Great

horned owls are widespread throughout North America and much of South America as well. They nest early in the year, making their calls throughout northern woodlands in winter a common sound. What unusual wildlife have you seen around the neighborhood? Send us pictures and share your story by emailing us at info@jhb.org, or writing via regular mail at **JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.**



Let's Green Queens

Want to do more to slow climate change? Here are some green tips for anyone wanting to make a difference. Fix it, Don't Toss it!*

BY MELISSA ZAVALA



Need some basic repairs? Consider our local merchants as a green alternative to buying new items.

Things today are made to break. But what if instead of buying disposable DIY furniture, brand new shoes, clothes, and more, we repaired old or broken items? The Japanese concept of *Kintsugi* provides inspiration for breathing new life into things and appreciating imperfections. By repairing cracked dishware, pots, and other items using gold, artisans strengthen them, making shattered wares more beautiful, transforming them into works of art with new stories to tell. This is not to propose pricey repairs for worn or damaged items but to encourage the idea that old, tattered, and worn things can have a second life, remain attractive,

and fulfill our needs. Where can damaged things be taken for repair? Sadly, there are few local menders around, but here are some worth supporting.

UPHOLSTERY: Corona Upholstery
101-19 Northern Boulevard (718) 429-6258

SHOE REPAIR: Columbus Shoe Repair
79-05 37th Avenue (718) 205-7651

ALTERATIONS: Unit Cleaners
77-05 37th Avenue (718) 639-7049

ELECTRICAL/APPLIANCES: Climate Crew Corp
37-63 83rd Street, Suite 221; (347) 418-7804

With the value of manual skills on the rise, our landfills becoming more costly and environmentally unsound, and our planet's limits becoming ever clearer, now is a good time to reconsider everyday practices and find ways to do more to waste less.

What green solutions would you like to promote? Email us at info@jhb.org, or send us questions and comments via regular mail at **JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.**

** To promote sustainable practices and support for local merchants, information for this list was crowdsourced from neighborhood residents and does not represent an endorsement by the organization.*



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VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS – Spring 2022

ONGOING EVENTS

Saturdays, 11am-1 pm

JH-SCRAPS (composting)

69th St. & 35th Ave.

For info on what is compostable,
contact info@JHBG.org

Most Saturdays, 10 am

Tree LC

Meets at the NE corner of
80th St. & 37th Ave.

Schedule may vary and include
some Sundays. Check the
[JHBG Facebook page](#)
for complete information.

Saturdays 10 am

Clean and Green

For complete details,
go to www.jhbg.org.

Daily

JH-CREW dog run

69th St. between 34th & 35th Aves.

To join, go to www.jhbg.org
for application. Suggested
donation, \$25/year.

FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS:

Please join us or renew your membership (there are 2 ways):

Go to www.JHBG.org/membership and pay by credit card.

It's quick and easy! Mail a check with this form
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JHBG–Membership • P.O. Box 720253

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Membership includes a subscription to *Views from the Heights* and helps fund our numerous
community activities. JHBG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, so your contribution is tax deductible.

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If you're interested in being contacted about any JHBG activities, please email
info@JHBG.org.