



VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

Volume 34, No. 2
Summer 2023

Jackson Heights
Beautification Group

www.JHBG.org

Jackson Heights – “A Garden in the City”



**Help the JH community by volunteering at our cleanups and other events!
Go to JHBG.org or e-mail info@jhbg.org to sign up!**

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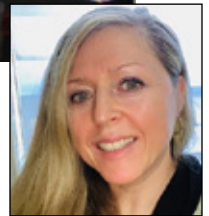
On the cover: Art by Kirsten Magnani. Happy 35th birthday JHBG. Created to preserve our architectural & urban history, JHBG expanded to focus on local ecology. This art celebrates JHBG today, in a community which cares for all. Can you spot these architectural details? Hint: look on 35th Avenue, 75th & 82nd Streets.

President's Message

BY LESLIE ELLMAN



The year-round Green Market, initiated by JHBG, is at its best in the summer; the Veggie Nuggets celebrate their growing garden.



Dear Neighbors,

This is no ordinary issue of *Views*, as we are proud to be celebrating our 35th Anniversary! That is quite a feat for an all-volunteer organization. It speaks to the tenacity and perseverance of the founders of the JHBG as well as the many directors and volunteers sustaining this community-building work for over three and a half decades.

It also speaks to our neighbors and neighborhood. Jackson Heights is a neighborhood of people who care. It was 35 years ago when a group of neighbors decided to roll up their sleeves and start cleaning up Travers Park, tackling issues like graffiti and urban gardening. Today, our scope is considerably larger and it's hard to imagine what the neighborhood would be like without some of our programs including the Halloween Parade, Summer Sundays, the Jackson Heights Orchestra, Tree LC, SCRAPS, *Views from the Heights* ... I could go on, but thankfully this issue will do that for me. Enjoy this retrospective as we reflect and celebrate 35 years of service and plan for many more to come!

Leslie Ellman, President

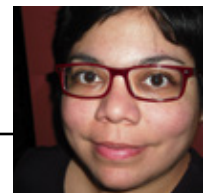
en español páginas 8-9



Growing up in JH: Views editor and her sister (left to right), fascinated by warm breath in the cold.

Editor's Message

Taking a Look Back BY MELISSA ZAVALA



This year marks the 35th anniversary of the Jackson Heights Beautification Group. This is a unique organization in different ways: it is an all-volunteer not-for-profit maintaining a variety of programming ranging in foci, and it continues to thrive based on the sheer energy and commitment of a volunteer board of directors working alongside many other volunteers in service to the neighborhood. This issue provides a look back at the organization's work supporting community life through difficult and promising times. It showcases the memories of the second President of the organization, the Honorable Rudolph Greco, retired Supreme Court Justice for the State of New York (the organization's first president passed away years ago). He also recounts the earliest history of the group. We are grateful to Justice Greco for his

service and continued support and for sharing his stories here. He has been a real leader in the community while serving on the board and beyond.

We hope that readers will celebrate this anniversary with us and come together to also honor the important centennials at St. Mark's Episcopal Church (80-08 34th Avenue) and at Garden School (33-16 79th Street). Our community has much to be proud of and celebrate! We are grateful for everyone's support and contributions to community life.

To borrow a familiar phrase from another one of our past presidents, Ed Westley, see you around the neighborhood!

Melissa Zavala,
Editor

SUMMER EVENTS IN JACKSON HEIGHTS

Jackson Heights Historic Weekend June 10-11

All events are held at/begin at the Community United Methodist Church of Jackson Heights, 81-10 35th Avenue.

Saturday, June 10th

- Exhibit of original photographs and ephemera from 10am to 2pm. **FREE**
- Lectures on Jackson Heights history at 10:45 am and 12:15 pm. **FREE**
- Garden Tour of 15 gardens from Noon to 4pm. **Ticket: \$15** (rain date June 17)

Sunday, June 11th

Walking Tour begins at Noon. **Ticket: \$15** (must be purchased or reserved in advance)

Tickets for both tours may be purchased in advance at Espresso 77 beginning on June 1.



Summer Sundays in the Park 2023 Concert Series

Winner of the Best of the Boro Cultural Arts Series, with concerts held every Sunday from July 2 through August 27 at 6pm in Travers Park. The Jackson Heights Orchestra will open the season on July 2! For weekly acts, stay tuned and follow us:

Instagram: [summersundaysjh](https://www.instagram.com/summersundaysjh)
Facebook: [facebook.com/SummerSundaysJH](https://www.facebook.com/SummerSundaysJH)

Gardening (Saturdays), 10:30 am. at the gardens at St. Mark's Episcopal Church on 34th Avenue, between 81st and 82nd Streets.



Arts Events

JH Art Talks

June 21, Angela Miskin introduced by Juan Hinojosa, Espresso 77, 8 pm. Happy hour begins at 7 pm. For more information, visit JHAT's website: [jharttalks.com/news](https://www.jharttalks.com/news)

Look out for El Mercado happening once a month in Jackson Heights throughout the summer, as well as for the outdoor Q77 Art Show once in June and then in August. More information to come.

The art collective CITYPRINTSNYC will be hosting an Arts Benefit Fundraiser on June 7th! For details on the event, visit: [cityprintsny.com/events](https://www.cityprintsny.com/events)

JHBG Friends of Travers Park

THEN

In 1991, as JHBG President, I was approached by three local young women, Elizabeth Kidder, Jean Kinn and Sue Pinto, who were appalled by the ragged condition of Travers Park which was unfit for use by young children.

The park had been neglected for years. Shattered glass, profane graffiti, litter, weeds, broken equipment, horrid toilets and, worst of all, human and animal waste, liquid and solid, were a common sight. The fact that Jackson Heights still ranks fourth lowest citywide in public park space made matters even more critical.

I suggested a new committee under the JHBG not-for-profit charitable umbrella. I promised that all funds raised would be dedicated solely for use by that committee.

As the first order of business, we organized a Spring Cleanup of Travers Park which was a rousing success. Dozens of neighbors from toddlers to seniors turned out in a massive effort to improve the park. One of the volunteers was hard at work painting over graffiti with quiet determination



as we gathered. I introduced myself and thanked the woman who turned out to be Diana Chapin, a local neighbor, who also happened to be the city's Deputy Parks Commissioner for Queens County!

Because our residents cared and showed up, the Parks Department and local elected officials followed suit. Repairs were made, regular maintenance was resumed, and the park became usable again.

Over the past decades the park has been redesigned three times, each time better than the last. The cleanups continued and summer outdoor concerts began under the aegis of JHBG Director Alan Kidder. The recent makeover, under Council Member

Danny Dromm, is outstanding. Today, Travers Park is a showplace packed with happy visitors from everywhere.

Happily, our new Councilmember Shekar Krishnan chairs the NYC Council of Parks and Recreation Committee which augurs well for us. Our parks and neighborhood are in good, capable, and caring hands. —R. G.

NOW

BY LESLIE ELLMAN
(Head of Friends of Travers Park, and current JHBG President)

When I first began volunteering with JHBG and Friends of Travers Park, the park looked different

than it does today. Besides the two play areas for children, the park was mostly a blacktop, accommodating simultaneous sports such as softball, basketball, tennis, volleyball, and free play! Then, 78th Street was a thorough street fully open to traffic and limiting all of the park's activities to confines that are difficult to imagine today.

As a group, Friends of Travers Park has always been hands-on, cleaning up and beautifying the park. We host regular cleanup events and advocate for the wellbeing of our most loved and well used park. We work closely with the Parks Department, Partnerships for Parks, and City Parks Foundation. This year, we worked with Beaudoin Realty and helped install the Little Library and continue presenting Summer Sundays in the Park concert series.

We are proud of the work we have done and continue to do at Travers and have now extended our advocacy and efforts towards Playground 90. We want to see all of



our neighborhood parks as well used and loved as Travers is!

I always called Travers Park, The Little Park That Could. Though it has grown considerably, it still is a park for all seasons and for everybody. We see a future where all of our parks live up to their full potential.

JHBG History 101: The Founding of the Jackson Heights Beautification Group

BY RUDY GRECO

BACKGROUND

In 1988, a group of neighbors formed the JHBG. The founding members were Mike Crowley, Marguerite Park, Fred Fox, Maura Been, Virginia Stevens, Kay Kelleher, Lynn Johnson, Vera Smith, and Isabel Bell. Some of the beauty of Jackson Heights was fading. The Queensboro Corporation, founded in 1909, by Edward Archibald MacDougall, who conceived and built Jackson Heights, one of the first planned communities in our country, was sold to Charles Hammond who took over the management tasks including collecting monthly maintenance and paying bills and taxes. But there was one small problem: Hammond was a crook. He was a convicted felon in Massachusetts where he promoted a kickback scheme for window replacement in a large-scale building development that he mismanaged!

Soon after taking over Queensboro, Hammond reverted to form. He commingled the monies he collected and helped himself to nearly a million dollars before he was discovered. The trusting and complacent cooperatives (80 buildings) learned a harsh lesson about the necessity for vigilance.

Traditionally, Queensboro also advocated with local authorities for various municipal services, like lighting, water, sewers, sanitation, policing, and others. Hammond also neglected these duties. He was too busy embezzling. As a result, the quality of life in Jackson Heights was deteriorating rapidly. Our beautiful neighborhood grew shabby

and overlooked. Graffiti covered our buildings, litter and dog waste covered our streets and sidewalks. The dog waste situation grew so critical that a group of incensed neighbors were moved to meet and act. They formed the Jackson Heights Beautification Group.

THE JHBG GROWS UP

The early group organized cleanups and began raising awareness of the status and needs of the community. The group grew slowly but steadily until 1989 when a proposed development project galvanized JHBG and the entire Jackson Heights area. The Northside of 37th Avenue between 82nd and 83rd Streets was occupied by a group of one-story storefronts including



Past JHBG Presidents, Rudy Greco and Adrienne Sumowicz

the popular Continental Restaurant and a Florsheim Shoe store, among others. Three suspicious fires broke out in the stores which were finally consumed in flames during the third conflagration.

Soon, developers proposed a new office building for the site. The zoning law



JHBG Board Members, Ed Westley and Rudy Greco introduce Senator Hillary Clinton to JH along with Congressman Joe Crowley.



Founding President Mike Crowley, with Bob Laconi.



JHBG Tribute Dinner, with long-time board member, Joe Ricevuto (left), at The Cavalier, 1993.



permitted, as of right, a nine-story structure set back from the sidewalk. Grasping with both hands, the developers applied to the NYC Board of Standards and Appeals for a variance allowing a 12-story structure, built full to the lot line, and covered with cheap mirrored glass. It was grotesque and based on the false assertion that the nine-story building replacing the single-story storefronts was a financial hardship.

The JHBG, under the charismatic leadership of its first president, Mike Crowley, convened its very first Town Hall Meeting in the summer of 1989 in the St. Joan of Arc School Auditorium. Despite the sweltering heat, the turnout was huge—standing room only—with many angry neighbors left out on the sidewalks unable to gain admission.

The crowd was loud, hostile, and unanimously opposed to the proposed building. A local lawyer volunteered to represent the community pro bono, threatening to tie up the project for two or three years while litigating the ridiculous “hardship” application. Fred Fox, an architect, volunteered to create a rendering of what the JHBG wanted the building to be: nine stories, set back from the sidewalk lot line, including at least one floor



A 1980s building that replaced lovely 1920s-era homes (left). The 82nd Street building as redesigned by board member Fred Fox (right).

**JHBG [has] endured—
turning our wonderfully
diverse community into a
home we can be proud of.**

of garage parking, and covered in brick so as to blend in with and enhance the neighborhood’s existing character.

Faced with such well organized and widespread opposition, the developers wisely backed down and built according to the wishes of the JHBG and community. The plan was changed radically to downsize and blend the structure into the existing environment.

The JHBG, with many new members, was now up and running. In the ensuing years, the group obtained landmark status, cleaned up graffiti, planted gardens and tree pits, revitalized Travers Park, started garden and historical district tours, a Halloween Parade, outdoor and indoor concerts, and published acclaimed local history books for adults and children, as well as a neighborhood newsletter. Best of all, that work and JHBG have endured—turning our wonderfully diverse community into a home we can be proud of.

From time to time over the span of JHBG’s history it has been necessary to organize and convene town hall meetings to channel public opinion and produce a focused public voice conveyed directly to elected officials and bureaucrats who are thereby pressured to act to resolve critical issues facing our community. Following up on that success, the JHBG went on to conduct additional successful town halls to improve neighborhood policing, sanitation, and parks. We successfully halted proposals to make 35th and 34th Avenues one-way streets to help ease traffic speed and enhance pedestrians’ safety and quality of life. We stopped a plan to eliminate our Q32 Bus line which is used by many elderly and disabled residents who can’t access the subways. We also held numerous candidates’ nights. The group continues to serve the community in different ways.

Rudy and Adrienne receiving recognition on behalf of JHBG for various early successes.



NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY MATTERS: Preserving Jackson Heights

BY DANIEL KARATZAS

In 1987 I purchased a copy of Robert A.M. Stern's *New York 1930: Architecture and Urbanism Between Two World Wars* (1987), an extremely detailed account of all that was built in New York City from the 1910s through the 1930s. What convinced me to purchase it was that the chapter on the outer boroughs began with Jackson Heights. Earlier that decade, Stern had written about the New York apartment house, and the inclusion of the garden apartment meant that Jackson Heights was prominently featured. From the voluminous footnotes—meaning a horde of graduate students must have gone through all of the many

architectural magazines of the period (and this was before the Internet)—I discovered that the Queensboro Corporation, the developer of Jackson Heights, had begun publishing the *Jackson Heights News* around 1917, and articles about their new neighborhood had also been written about in many periodicals. It got me thinking.

Then, later that year, the architectural historian Barry Lewis, gave a slide presentation at the Community Church on the Jackson Heights development. It included many photographs by Wurts and Brown Brothers, firms hired by the Queensboro Corporation to chronicle its Jackson Heights development. Similar photographs had been used in Stern's book, and they were stunning.

A year or so later I ventured to the New York Public Library's local history room at the Fifth Avenue branch and found bound copies of both the *Jackson Heights News* and the architectural magazines that Stern had mentioned. He and his team did the true "dirty work" in finding these sources. I also traveled to Columbia



An early ad for Jackson Heights (left). An early issue of Queensboro Corporation publication showing people ice skating in front of the Greystones (80th Street & 37th Avenue).

University's architecture library and the Queens Public Library's main Jamaica branch to continue my research and take photographs of the many photographs in these periodicals.

This being the pre-internet era, and not having a laptop, I used yellow legal pads to write down most of the information I found. Thus began the research for my own book, *Jackson Heights – A Garden in the City* (1990). Writing it took a little over 18 months, from start to finish. In hindsight, I have found that that was a very aggressive pace. Helped by then

resident Sara Reynolds, who designed the book, the publication date of the book was December 4, 1990, which was the day that the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public meeting in Jackson Heights to discuss the designation of over 30 blocks as a New York City historic district.

Given that the JHBG was then a fledgling organization, the publication was made possible by a generous grant from the J.M. Kaplan Fund, along with a great deal of volunteer effort. Since its initial publication at the end of 1990, over 8,000 copies have been sold, and it is still in print.

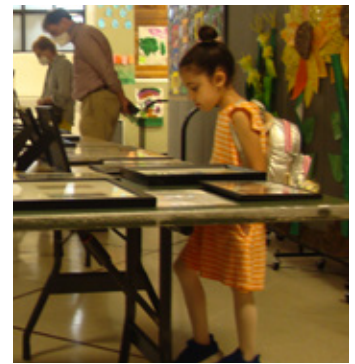
FROM ICE AGE TO SPACE AGE AND BEYOND!

Spurred on by the success of my book, JHBG board member, Rudy Greco, spearheaded the publication of a children's history of *Jackson Heights – Jackson Heights from Ice Age to Space Age*. First published in 1995, it chronicles the history of our neighborhood over the centuries, or should I say, millennia. Assisted by Claudia Solomon, Carson Scheidemann, and again designed by Sara Reynolds, the book is illustrated with artwork made by students from our neighborhood schools (who must now be in their 40s!). For many years the book has been included in the goody bags given out at the JHBG's annual Children's Halloween Parade.





JHBG Board Member, Louise Mulvihill, welcomes attendees at the Community Methodist Church.



Historic Tours

A Route Towards Landmarking Our Historic District

BY DANIEL KARATZAS

After the publication of *Jackson Heights – A Garden in the City* (1990), and aware that we were on-track for historic district status, I thought that holding some history-related events in the neighborhood would help convince residents of the importance of landmark designation. Walking tours were popular, and some were done, rather infrequently, in Jackson Heights. And since we were going to be landmarked because of our innovative garden apartments, then a garden tour would certainly be of interest. So, starting in 1991, the JHBG initiated its now annual “Historic Jackson Heights Weekend”.

The walking tour was easy. I would do it. Over the years other residents—Janet Kelly, Dave Watson, Susan Latham, and Matico Josephson—have served as walking tour guides. Now, each year, between 50 and 80 people join us on the walking tour. And thanks to the assistance of other intrepid community members, I was able to organize the garden tour. Residents of the garden apartment complexes volunteer to staff the garden entrance, with others offering



JHBG celebrates our neighborhood annually on Historic Weekend, showcasing archival photos and memorabilia.

information about each garden. The garden tour has proven to be especially popular. Of late it has grown, with 15 gardens typically participating, and between 250 and 300 people taking the self-guided tour each year. All in all, a win-win for Jackson Heights.

In addition to the tours, the JHBG has held a Student Art Contest for many years. Organized by JHBG board member Barbara Kunkel, we invite local schools to have their students participate by drawing a Jackson Heights-themed work. The entries are judged and the winners have their work

displayed in a local store window for a few weeks prior to the Historic Weekend. A reception is held on the Thursday prior to the Historic Weekend and cash prizes are awarded to the student winners. Parents and teachers are invited, the works are displayed, and an all-around good time is had by everyone in attendance.

Part of Saturday’s Historic Weekend events include a presentation on the neighborhood’s history and an exhibit of photographs, maps, and other Jackson Heights ephemera. Thanks to a number of donations, and, in years past, eBay, the JHBG has accumulated an extensive archive on the history of the development of the Jackson Heights community, focusing on the early years, 1910 to 1950. Unfortunately, it resides in storage for 364 days a year and is only displayed on the second Saturday in June. Suggestions for a permanent display are welcomed. Email us at info@jhb.org.

This year, the JHBG’s annual historic weekend will start on Saturday, June 10th—presentation and exhibit at the Community Church and the Garden Tour. The Walking Tour will be held on Sunday, June 11.

JHBG Landmarking, THEN

Over the last 35 years, no achievement of the JHBG surpasses landmarking’s importance or benefit to Jackson Heights. It was and remains the single greatest factor in preserving and revitalizing this neighborhood. It didn’t happen overnight. In fact, it took nearly 20 years to bring about.

The idea for local landmarking was the brainchild of a distinguished neighbor who asked to remain

anonymous for this article. Back in the mid 1970’s he was employed at the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission and recognized the architectural beauty and significance of Jackson Heights.

He initiated the application process and sought the support of the Jackson Heights Civic Association led by Patrick Deignan and The College Women’s Club of Jackson Heights. The effort eventually lost momentum and

lay dormant until the late 1980’s when the JHBG Architecture Committee took up the cause.

The impetus for the JHBG’s effort can be seen to this day along the east side of 86th Street between 35th and 37th Avenues where a number of the handsome original homes sit alongside unattractive latter day tenement style replacements.

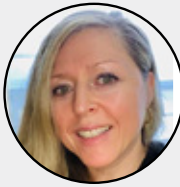
The JHBG raised the money to survey and catalog every existing

structure in the proposed historic district which was much larger than the final result due to supposed bureaucratic budget concerns. Many people supported the effort of the principal proponents. Mike Crowley, Fred Fox, Dan Karatzas, Frank Moon, Jeffrey Saunders, and this author all testified at public hearings. Jackson Heights today is the result of their efforts and those who came before them.—R. G.

Mensaje de la presidenta

POR LESLIE ELLMAN

Queridos vecinos: esta edición del boletín no es ordinaria, ya que estamos celebrando nuestro trigésimo quinto aniversario, todo un logro para una organización de voluntarios. Esto habla de la tenacidad y perseverancia de los fundadores del JHBG, así como de los muchos directores y voluntarios que han sostenido esta labor comunitaria por todo este tiempo. Hace 35 años que un grupo de residentes decidieron arremangarse las camisas y comenzar a limpiar Travers Park y hacerse cargo de asuntos como el grafiti y la jardinería urbana. Disfruten esta retrospectiva mientras reflexionamos y celebramos 35 años de servicio y planeamos los muchos más que vendrán.



aniversario con nosotros y se unan para homenajear el centenario de la iglesia episcopal de San Mark (80-08 34th Av) y del jardín escolar (33-16 79th Street).

Amigos de Travers Pak, hoy

POR LESLIE ELLMAN

Cuando me uní como voluntaria al JHBG y a Amigos de Travers Park, el parque tenía un aspecto muy diferente. Además de las dos áreas de juego para los niños, era sobre todo una superficie de asfalto que albergaba simultáneamente deportes como softbol, básquetbol, tenis, vóleybol y juego libre. Los Amigos de Travers Park siempre se han preocupado por la limpieza y el embellecimiento del parque. Organizamos eventos de limpieza con regularidad y abogamos por el bienestar de nuestro parque más querido y usado. Este año trabajamos con Beaudoin Realty y ayudamos a instalar la pequeña biblioteca, y continuaremos presentando la serie de conciertos "Domingos de verano en el parque".

Historia 101 del JHBG: la fundación del Jackson Heights Beautification Group

POR RUDY GRECO

Antecedentes. En 1988 un grupo de voluntarios formaron el JHBG. Los miembros fundadores fueron Mike Crowley, Marguerite Park, Fred Fox, Maura Been, Virginia Stevens, Kay Kelleher, Lynn Johnson, Vera Smith e Isabel Bell.

El ascenso. El primer grupo organizaba limpiezas y comenzó a despertar conciencia sobre las condiciones y necesidades del vecindario. Creció lenta pero constantemente hasta 1989, cuando un proyecto de desarrollo estimuló al JHBG y a toda el área de Jackson Heights:

la propuesta de construcción de un edificio de 12 pisos en el lado norte de la Avenida 37, entre las calles 82 y 83. Bajo el liderazgo de su carismático presidente, Mike Crowley, el JHBG convocó su primera reunión comunitaria en el verano de 1989 en el auditorio de la escuela St. Joan of Arc. La asistencia fue tan numerosa que muchos de los enojados asistentes se quedaron afuera en la acera. Ante una oposición tan bien organizada, los constructores desistieron. Después de ese resultado exitoso, y hasta la fecha, el JHBG ha seguido realizando juntas vecinales para mejorar la vigilancia, el saneamiento público y los parques.

Retrospectiva: el Broadway del JHBG llega a las alturas

POR RUDY GRECO

En diciembre de 1991, los voluntarios de JHBG se encontraban ocupados decorando la oficina de correos para el festival anual de luces navideñas. Un joven se destacaba por trabajar con diligencia. Le hablé y supe su nombre: Gary John La Rosa. Impresionado por sus habilidades y su ética, invité a Gary a unirse al grupo como director siguiendo tres reglas simples: asistir a las reuniones mensuales, dirigir una actividad y asegurarse de que esa actividad tuviera finanzas autosostenibles. Él me explicó que, debido a su trabajo, su asistencia sería irregular y no sabía qué actividad podría supervisar. Le dije que no importaba, que ya veríamos. Resultó que Gary era coreógrafo y director en Broadway. Meses más tarde nos sorprendió con una propuesta: un concierto en Jackson Heights donde varios de sus amigos interpretarían las canciones de sus obras de Broadway acompañados

solo por un piano. En los dos años siguientes presentamos dos producciones más y recaudamos fondos para el JHBG. Gracias Gary, Jim Steere y todos los voluntarios que hicieron memorables esos eventos.

La historia del vecindario importa: preservar Jackson Heights

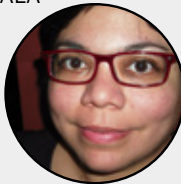
POR DANIEL KARATZAS

En 1987 compré un ejemplar de *Nueva York 1930: Arquitectura y urbanismo entre dos guerras mundiales* (1987), de Robert A. M. Stern. Se trata de un recuento muy detallado de todo lo que fue construido en Nueva York desde la década de 1910 hasta la década de 1930. Ahí descubrí que la Queensboro Corporation, que impulsó el desarrollo urbano de Jackson Heights, había empezado a publicar Jackson Heights News en 1917, y muchas otras publicaciones periódicas también habían divulgado varios artículos sobre su nuevo vecindario. Así comencé una investigación en varias bibliotecas de Nueva York para escribir mi libro *Jackson Heights: un jardín en la ciudad* (1990). Con la ayuda de Sara Reynolds, quien se encargó del diseño, el libro se publicó el 14 de diciembre de 1990, que fue el día que la Comisión para la Preservación de Edificios Históricos sostuvo una reunión pública en Jackson Heights para discutir la designación de más de 30 manzanas como distrito histórico. Gracias al éxito de mi libro, Rudy Greco, miembro de la mesa directiva del JHBG, promovió la publicación de la historia de Jackson Heights para niños: *Jackson Heights desde la Era del Hielo hasta la Era del Espacio* (1995), ilustrado con piezas de estudiantes de las escuelas del vecindario.

Mensaje de la editora

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

¡Este año, el Jackson Heights Beautification Group cumple 35 años! Este grupo es único por varias razones: es una organización sin ánimo de lucro formada en su totalidad por voluntarios que realizan una variedad de programas con distintos enfoques. En este número ofrece una mirada retrospectiva sobre el trabajo que hemos realizado en apoyo a la comunidad en tiempos tanto difíciles como esperanzadores. Compartimos los recuerdos del segundo presidente de la organización, el honorable Rudolph Greco, juez jubilado de la Suprema Corte del Estado de Nueva York. Esperamos que los lectores celebren este





Unos de los artistas de varios estilos musicales presentados en la serie de conciertos del verano "Summer Sundays in the Park".

Serie de conciertos "Domingos de verano en el parque"

POR JOE KNIPES

Los "Domingos de verano en el parque" son una serie de conciertos al aire libre cada domingo durante julio y agosto en el área para escenario de la calle 78 en Travers Park. Todos los conciertos empiezan a las 6:00 p. m., están abiertos a todo el público y son gratis. El JHBG se esfuerza en representar las diversas culturas que viven en Jackson Heights, la comunidad más diversa del mundo, mediante conciertos de distintos géneros musicales.

Recorrido histórico: una ruta hacia la demarcación de nuestro distrito histórico

POR DANIEL KARATZAS

Después de la publicación de *Jackson Heights: un jardín en la ciudad*, pensé que organizar eventos relacionados con la historia del vecindario ayudaría a convencer a los residentes de la importancia de designar monumentos históricos y, ya que íbamos a obtener tal designación por nuestros innovadores apartamentos con jardines, un recorrido por estos sería interesante. Así que, en

1991, el JHBG inició su "Fin de semana histórico de Jackson Heights". Actualmente, cada año participan 15 jardines y entre 250 y 300 personas toman el recorrido autoguiado. Este año, el evento, con la presentación y la exposición en la Iglesia Comunitaria, será el sábado 10 de junio, y el recorrido a pie, el domingo 11 de junio.

Con Edison celebra 200 años de alumbrar Nueva York

Con Edison celebra dos centurias de alumbrar Nueva York, desde su icónica silueta y las luces de Times Square hasta los millones de casas, restaurantes, hoteles y otros negocios que hacen de la ciudad un destino internacional. Fue fundada en 1823 como compañía de iluminación a base de gas y llegó a establecer el modelo de lo que sería una planta eléctrica moderna. Para conocer más sobre el sistema eléctrico de la ciudad de Nueva York visita ConEd.com.

Un simple compromiso para hacer de Jackson Heights un lugar más verde

POR LEN MANIACE

Jackson Heights se destaca por ser un área bastante verde; sin embargo, en cuanto

a árboles se refiere, está por debajo del promedio en la ciudad, con 19 % comparado con el 22 % que reporta el "Estado de los bosques urbanos en Nueva York" (2021) de The Nature Conservancy. Aquí entra tu parte con el medio ambiente y con nuestros árboles, y tu juramento a la Naturaleza por Jackson Heights: "Me comprometo a hacer al menos una de las siguientes acciones tanto como me sea posible": nota la naturaleza en nuestras calles; ayuda a la naturaleza adoptando un árbol de tu calle o, al menos, recogiendo la basura de las jardineras; cuida de la naturaleza con un amigo, invita a un vecino o únete al programa Tree LC del JHBG en jhbgtrees@gmail.com.

El desfile infantil de Halloween: se necesita toda una comunidad

POR EDWIN O'KEEFE WESTLEY

El JHBG ha patrocinado el desfile de Halloween del vecindario por más de 30 años. Nuestras escuelas, los voluntarios, los policías del NYPD, los comerciantes locales, las organizaciones, los políticos, los altos oficiales y ustedes, los espectadores, lo hacen posible. Estamos muy agradecidos con los comerciantes por sus donaciones, que oscilan entre \$100 y \$300 dólares. Un especial agradecimiento al comité organizador, a Newton HS Key Club y a la PS69. ¡Nos vemos en Halloween!

Embellecer Jackson Heights: limpieza del grafiti

POR JAMES RICCIO

En las décadas de 1980 y 1990, el grafiti invadía Jackson Heights. Los fundadores del JHBG reconocieron, desde el principio, que promover el embellecimiento debía incluir

la eliminación del grafiti. A lo largo de los años, decenas de voluntarios han contribuido con tiempo y energía para lograrlo. Desafortunadamente, no ha desaparecido del todo y algunas áreas, en particular en la Avenida Roosevelt, parecen inmunes. Pero no nos rendiremos. Y tú también puedes ayudar: pinta un buzón de correo, un poste o la puerta de una tienda, haz una donación, llama al 311 para reportarlo y pide el limpiador que ofrece el gobierno de la ciudad, presenta una queja en línea a nyc.gov o contacta a los cazagrafiti del JHBG, ¡considera unirse al equipo!

Del auge a la decadencia: un Jackson Heights que evoluciona

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

Diseñado con sensibilidades suburbanas y construido alrededor del Movimiento Ciudad Jardín promovido por el urbanista inglés Ebenezer Howard, Jackson Heights fue creado en la década de 1910 tras la apropiación de terrenos por un grupo de especuladores liderados por Edward MacDougall, dueño de la Queensboro Corporation. La distintiva arquitectura de la zona ha servido como base de su persistente sentido de identidad, que ha perdurado por más de una centena. Jackson Heights ha experimentado tanto la revitalización de su población como el conflicto social. Las drogas, las pandillas, la desaparición de lugares históricos y la perturbación de la calidad de vida, que caracterizaron sobre todo las décadas de 1970 y 1980, se enfrentaron con grupos civiles que han atendido las necesidades del vecindario para preservar el bienestar de la comunidad hasta el día de hoy.

From Boom to Bust, and Back Again: *An Evolving Jackson Heights*

BY
MELISSA ZAVALA

Designed with suburban sensibilities and constructed around the Garden City Movement promoted by English urban planner, Ebenezer Howard, Jackson Heights came into being in the 1910s following a land grab by speculators led by Edward MacDougall, owner of the Queensboro Corporation. Emphasizing light, space, and greenery, MacDougall planned a neighborhood with specifications not just for home construction but for building community at every scale. The area's architectural distinctiveness has served as the basis for its persistent sense of identity, one which has lasted over a century. This year marks not just the 35th anniversary of the Jackson Heights Beautification Group, but also the centennial for St. Mark's Episcopal Church and Garden School in a decade of commemorations. Some of the other celebrated hundred-year-old buildings around the neighborhood include the Laurel Apartment Building (1914) on 82nd Street and Northern Boulevard, the Grey Stones (1918) on 80th Street between 35th and 37th Avenues, among others. What has kept our neighborhood thriving? This year we reflect on what makes our



One of the spectacular floats from el festival de las flores, the Colombian Flowers Festival. Medellín's most important festival is now also a neighborhood tradition.

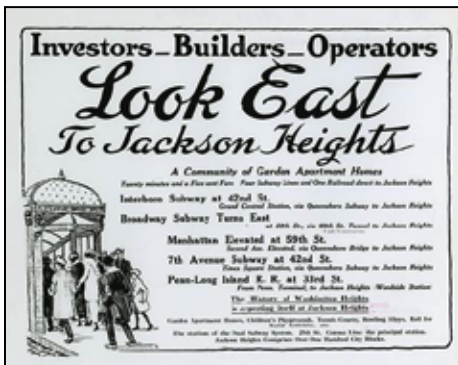
community's life exceptional, on the civic work that makes it especially lively and enduring, as well as on what is still left to do to strengthen it.

As other neighborhoods struggled with urban decay following the social

unrest of the 1960s, and the fiscal crisis the following decade, Jackson Heights resisted disinvestment and did not succumb to the type of out-migration brought on by the changing character of American cities and the widespread



Edward Archibald MacDougall (left) was the prime buyer of the land area in what is now Jackson Heights. From the Queensboro Corporation building (bottom right), garden complexes and neighborhood life were all carefully planned.





Jackson Heights celebrates new immigrant arrivals like the Sherpa from the most mountainous regions in Asia.

This year we reflect on what makes our community's life exceptional... as well as on what is still left to do to strengthen it.

deindustrialization that battered other areas. This was due in part to the co-op system of homeownership in place, making for high rates of owner-inhabited units. While civil unrest and expanding rights for Black citizens and other communities of color triggered White Flight to the suburbs, real estate was not abandoned here on the same scale, even as different buildings fell into disrepair and original housing stock was demolished. At the same time, updates to immigration laws made for further changes to urban demographics. An influx of immigrants primarily from Latin America and Asia brought mixed groups to Jackson Heights. These communities continue to influence the character of the

neighborhood, as has the very visible and politically engaged LGBTQIA community predating their arrival.

But decades of urban disinvestment and shifting demographics have produced mixed results. Jackson Heights has experienced both a revitalization of its population as well as social conflict. The decades of the 1970s and 1980s are remembered as being characterized by increased anxieties over crime and blight. In Jackson Heights, drugs, gangs, the disappearance of historical places, disturbances to the quality of life, were met with a lively community of civic groups addressing neighborhood needs to preserve community life. As a result, Jackson Heights persisted. What challenges remain? As diverse as the neighborhood is—with around 167 languages spoken in its 300 acres, and 64% of its population being foreign-born according to the 2020 Census—communities mostly coexist side by side rather than intertwined. While peaceful coexistence makes for a productive beginning, we must continue to work to better integrate and strengthen community life for our common good.



An open community, JH welcomes people of all genders and sexual orientations.

Summer Sundays in the Park Concert Series

BY JOE KNIPES

Since 2004, JHBG has been bringing stellar artists to Travers Park every Sunday in the summertime. There's something for everyone, from classic rock to South Asian drums, along with dance and jazz. With Jackson Heights as our setting, JHBG strives to represent in musical acts the many diverse cultures living in our neighborhood and in the World's Borough at large, offering a variety of acts from various genres and cultures.

Summer Sundays in the Park is an outdoor concert series scheduled every Sunday in July and August on the 78th Street performance area in Travers Park in Jackson Heights, Queens. All concerts begin at 6 pm and are free and open to the public.



Variety and talent have made "Summer Sundays" the Best of the Boro.

THROWBACK

JHBG's Broadway Hits the Heights

BY RUDY GRECO

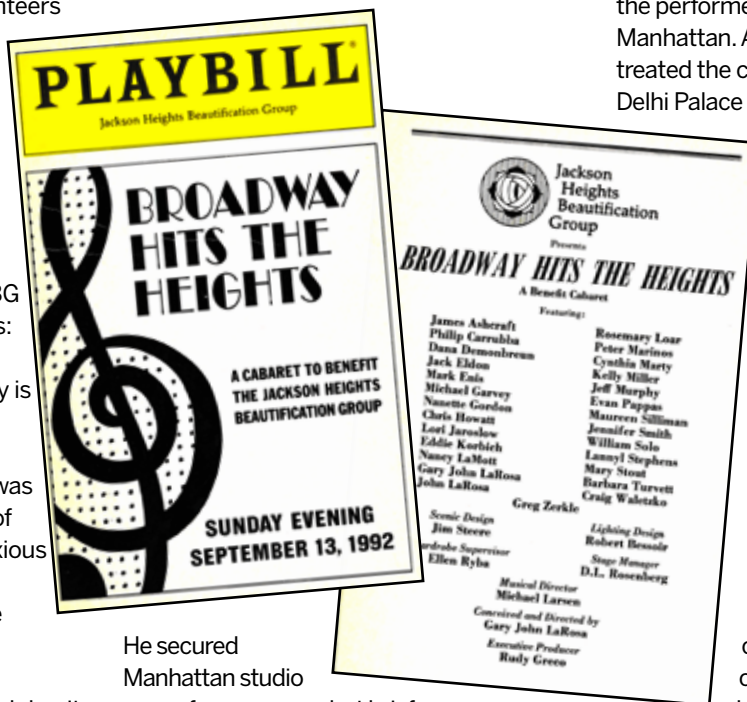
In December of 1991, JHBG volunteers were busily decorating our Post Office for the annual Holiday Lighting Festival. One young man stood out as particularly hardworking and effective. I spoke to him and learned his name: Gary John LaRosa.

Impressed by his skill and work ethic I invited Gary John to join JHBG as director under three simple rules: attend monthly meetings, direct an activity, and ensure that this activity is financially self-sustaining.

He explained that his work took him out of town so his attendance was unpredictable, and he didn't know of any activity he could supervise. Anxious to have him join our ranks, I said we could overlook his absences and he could think about his activity later.

The result was unexpected and wonderful but not surprising. Gary John, it turned out, was a choreographer/director on and off Broadway! Months later he proposed a brilliant idea. He could stage a concert in Jackson Heights featuring many of his Broadway friends singing the hit songs from their shows, in concert form, with only a piano to accompany them.

I volunteered to administer the event and enlisted Jim Steere to decorate the stage leaving Gary to concentrate on performances. Gary lined up stars and some star understudies as well as a pianist.



He secured Manhattan studio space for necessary but brief rehearsals.

I arranged for use of the Garden School Auditorium venue and with help from Bill and Pat Cleary, Susan Ross, Maire Breen, and many others we set up seating in tables of ten cabaret style with candles and floral centerpieces. Jim Steere painted a giant scrim backdrop depicting artful renditions of The Chateau and The Towers. It was stunning.

A local car service owner donated three chauffeured limousines to bring

the performers to Queens and back to Manhattan. After a brief rehearsal we treated the cast to a sumptuous lunch at Delhi Palace courtesy of owner and JHBG director Abraham Mammen from Goa, India.

I bartered a deal for authentic Playbills by removing graffiti from the company's two production buildings in nearby Woodside.

The show went off beautifully and flawlessly. At intermission we served sparkling wine and cider, with exquisite cookies baked by outstanding chef, Marie Regusis.

After the show Gert Weiss, co-owner of Clark's Dress Shop on 82nd Street, introduced herself as a lifelong Broadway theatergoer on a weekly basis. She said to me, "This was the very best single night of Broadway show music that I've ever seen".

Over the next years we staged two more distinct productions raising lots of money for JHBG and lifting our local profile and spirit. Jackson Heights is blessed with many talented residents capable of great things. It still is.

Thank you Gary John LaRosa, Jim Steere, and the many volunteers who made those events memorable.

CON EDISON CELEBRATES 200 YEARS OF ENERGIZING NEW YORK



Con Edison is celebrating its 200th anniversary, marking two centuries of powering New York—from the iconic city skyline and the lights of Times Square to the millions of homes, restaurants, hotels, and other businesses that make the city a global destination.

Founded in 1823 as a gas lighting company, Con Edison went on to establish the model for what became the modern electric utility. Among its many innovations, the company built the country's first true power grid using the Pearl Street Station in lower Manhattan, which delivered

electric service to an entire neighborhood.

Building on its track record of innovation, the company is making historic investments in clean energy technologies that will help New York meet its climate goals to deliver 100 percent clean energy by 2040—with the focus on building a climate-resilient energy system that will run primarily on renewables.

We are proud to fund JHBG and all of their community work.

To learn more about the history of New York City's energy system visit [ConEd.com](https://www.coned.com).





Beautifying Jackson Heights: Graffiti Busting

BY JAMES RICCIO

“Why bother? It will just come back.” The JHBG’s graffiti busters have been asked this question routinely over the nearly 35 years they’ve been on the job. It’s a reasonable question. And it’s partly true: places we clean do sometimes get hit again with nasty-looking tags and scribbles. But it’s mostly not true. If it were true, the neighborhood would be smothered in graffiti today—just as it was in the 1980s and 1990s. Back then, graffiti was truly rampant in Jackson Heights. Ask any long-term resident. No structure—not even our precious landmark buildings—was immune. And none of it could be considered “art”. No Banksy here. No uplifting community murals. It was pure vandalism. Fortunately, while some spots do require repeat visits from the JHBG team, most places we clean remain clean for many years.

The founders of the JHBG recognized from the start that promoting beautification had to include cleaning that graffiti. The group made that task one of its top priorities, and it remains so today. Over the years, tens of volunteers have contributed time and energy on weekend mornings toward this effort. On a typical outing, two to four volunteers at a time trudge toward one or more offending locations with a big cart full of chemical paint removers (Vandal-X and Dietrich 606 are our favorites), scrubbing brushes, gloves, face masks, and hoses, while also



In addition to graffiti busting, JHBG’s Clean Streets volunteers have been keeping the neighborhood neat for decades.

pushing a heavy-duty pressure washer on wheels. Over the course of two to four hours, they apply the chemicals, and use a steel brush to scrub stubborn spots. They hook the power-washer up to a nearby fire hydrant or building spigot, turn on the water, and blast away the bubbling mixture of paint and chemicals. Sometimes two or three applications are required to get a wall clean. In places where paint removal is not feasible, such as previously painted surfaces, mailboxes, and lampposts, they simply paint over the offending tags. One intrepid graffiti buster is so passionate about lamp posts, mailboxes, and traffic boxes, that he ventures out on many an evening, like an angel in the night, with a bag full of spray cans to paint over small but voluminous tags left by vandals we never see.

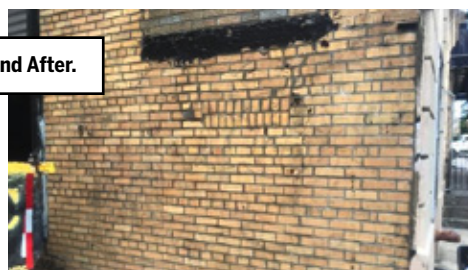
The supplies we use are expensive. Thankfully, many neighbors have helped fund the effort with their generous donations to the JHBG. These contributions have kept our graffiti-busting project in business for over three decades. Also keeping us going are two words—“thank you!”—that countless passersby offer to our sweaty volunteers on the job. These small expressions of appreciation mean a lot, and they reinforce our commitment to help improve the neighborhood.

As anyone can see, graffiti, unfortunately, has not totally disappeared from the neighborhood. New tags pop up continuously. And some areas, particularly along Roosevelt Avenue, seem immune to progress. But we’ll keep at it. And you can help too. Paint a mailbox. Paint lamppost. Paint a storefront gate. Make a donation. Call 311 to report graffiti and request free graffiti removal offered by NYC or go online at [Graffiti Complaint \(nyc.gov\)](http://GraffitiComplaint.nyc.gov) to submit a request (it takes only seconds to enter the address of a property). Or contact the JHBG’s graffiti busters—and consider joining the team!

To see the graffiti busters in action, watch this one-minute video: [youtube.com/channel/UC61BMK_xqyuCxH9Q7BmZOA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC61BMK_xqyuCxH9Q7BmZOA)



Before and After.



VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

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Jackson Heights Beautification Group

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The Children's Halloween Parade: It Takes a Village

BY EDWIN O'KEEFE WESTLEY



Through the years, the parade has featured The Pipes & Drums Of The Emerald Society of the NYPD (seen here in 2004, top) and its Color Guard (from 1992, bottom), affiliated with the Irish American Emerald Society. This ensemble is regarded as the nationwide standard for police department bands and has entertained luminaries and residents alike.



Honorable guests and elected officials, like State Senator Jessica Ramos (top) and Queens Borough President Donovan Richards (bottom), help celebrate the parade every year.



The Jackson Heights Beautification Group has been sponsoring the neighborhood's Halloween Parade for over 30 years. What started out as a way of giving neighborhood children something to do on All Hallows Eve as the city combated Halloween hooliganism

with helicopters and floodlights, has become the largest children's parade in the city.

Our local schools, volunteers, NYPD officers, local merchants, neighborhood organizations, elected officials, Grand Marshalls, and you, our spectators, make up our Jackson Heights village.

Students from our local schools make up the core of the marchers. We coordinate with Parent Coordinators at every school. The middle schools, IS230 and IS145, provide marching bands. Today, IS230's band, led by Mr. Rob Diefenbach, continues the tradition.

The NYPD plays a critical role in controlling the flow of traffic down 37th Avenue from 89th Street to 76th Street. The precinct's role is so important that this year PO Bobbi, the parade coordinator for many years, will be invited to be one of the Grand Marshalls.

Mayor Bloomberg was once Marshall as well; a photo op developed but there wasn't any film in the camera. The rest is history.

We are very thankful to our merchants for providing funding for the parade. Donations from local merchants range from \$100 to \$300. Foodtown provides 2,500 fruit drinks and the Coca Cola distributor donates 19 cases.

A special shout out to the parade committee, Newtown HS Key club, and PS69 for use of their school building for setting up and for celebrating.

See you on Halloween to pick up one of 2,500 Trick or Treat bags distributed at the end of the parade.

A Simple Pledge to Make Jackson Heights Greener

BY LEN MANIACE



Jackson Heights strikes us as a pretty green place—in the traditional sense given its ample garden space for such a dense neighborhood; and as environmentally sustainable in terms of walkability and abundance of rapid transit.

But by one important measure—tree coverage—

Jackson Heights ranks below the New York City average, at 19 percent, with the city averaging 22 percent when last measured, reports The Nature Conservancy's *The State of the Urban Forest in NYC* (2021).

Why does this matter? Trees play a key role in making a neighborhood

green. They are among the largest living things on land, and provide microecosystems for birds down to single-cell critters. What's more, trees are Mother Nature's air conditioners, cooling the city's sweltering summer days which threaten to grow hotter due to climate change.

For these reasons and others, we think it's time for a deeper commitment to the natural environment and to trees in our neighborhood, as summed up by the following Nature Pledge for Jackson Heights.

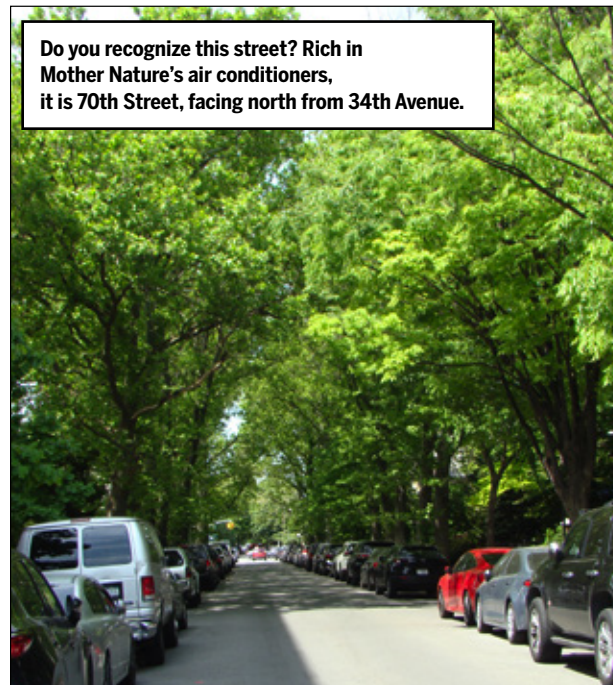
All our neighbors deserve to experience the natural world outside their doors, on their way to school, shopping, or the subway. We need nature in our lives, every day, especially children. Nature is not a weekend experience or for enjoyment on summer excursions to "the country" for the fortunate. It belongs in the city, it is here, and in need of preservation.

Along our streets grow maples, with sweet sap flowing under their bark in late winter. Each spring, oaks are home to hundreds of varieties of caterpillars, an essential food for baby birds in nests. By summer, bees and butterflies visit flowers growing in beds around those trees and in nearby gardens.

Even better is when trees and flowering plants are native to New York. Having evolved with local insects and other organisms, regional plants are recognized as sources of food and other essentials. In contrast, some non-native flowering plants—despite their beauty to humans—are not even noticed by bees and butterflies.

Local street trees, the gardens at their base, and the growing number of our neighborhood's pollinator gardens are often children's first experience with nature—something seen when mothers point out (in various languages) bees flitting from flower to flower at the Jackson Heights Post Office Butterfly Garden.

The flora and fauna of the city are not lesser forms of nature—they are the real thing. The towering sugar maple behind



Do you recognize this street? Rich in Mother Nature's air conditioners, it is 70th Street, facing north from 34th Avenue.

a building on 80th Street doesn't differ that much from that in the countryside. Neither does the milkweed, the essential plant for Monarch butterflies, growing in St. Mark's Church Garden.

The natural world just needs help to thrive in our city, and that's where you and the Nature Pledge for Jackson Heights come in.

I hereby pledge to do at least one of the following as often as possible:

★ **Notice nature along our streets.**

How are the leaves different on different trees? How do they change over time? Fall isn't the only time leaves change

color. Light green leaves of spring turn deep green in summer. Notice which flowers attract bees and butterflies and which don't. Learn why.

★ **Help nature. Adopt a tree on your block—or at least pick up a piece of litter in a tree bed.**

If you adopt a tree, remember young trees, like young children, need the most care. With a trowel or hand rake loosen the soil, being careful not to damage tree roots. Regularly water newly planted trees for the first three years after they've been planted, as well as older trees during hot, dry spells. Trees need 18 gallons of water a week, broken down into two or three waterings. Water slowly to avoid runoff into the street.

★ **Take care of nature with a friend.** It's easier to take on new activities with others. Invite a neighbor or join JHBG's Tree LC team. Not only will it be more fun, but you will begin to understand nature in a deeper way. To volunteer with the Tree LC team contact us at jhbgtrees@gmail.com.

With our help, nature will flourish here—and we will all be happier and healthier for it.

JHBG is part of a broad coalition seeking to increase our city's tree canopy to at least 30 percent by 2035, a plan called the NYC Urban Forest Agenda. Read more details at forestforall.nyc.



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IEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS – Summer 2023

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 info@JHBG.org.

Daily
JH-CREW dog run
69th St. between 34th & 35th Aves.
To join, go to info@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
for the membership level you select to:

**JHBG–Membership • P.O. Box 720253
Jackson Heights, NY 11372**

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.

Please check membership level:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Please print the following:

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Address (Include apt. #): _____

City/State/Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

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