

# PARK NOTES

SPECIAL ISSUE

SPRING 2014

## CONSERVANCY EVENTS: BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER

*“As I have often said, the events at Carl Schurz Park are not just the icing on the cake, they are an integral part of making Carl Schurz Park the center of the community.”* Ann Meschery, Director of In-Park Events and former Conservancy Board Member



ROBERT ENGLEBRIGHT



DAN NELKEN

If ever there were a spring and summer to look forward to, it's the spring and summer of '14. As we clawed and crawled our way out of an old-fashioned winter, having a blooming, budding Carl Schurz Park outside our collective door has been a reminder of how fortunate we are to live where we do.

And then, there are all those

terrific Conservancy-presented events on the calendar. In many, many ways, they have been a long time coming.

Unlike other New York City parks, the majority of Carl Schurz Park events are home-grown, made from scratch, built from within the Conservancy's various committees. Nurtured by loyal and creative volunteers and

staff, with the support of the Board of Directors, the events that now draw thousands of families and friends to the Park started small, and sometimes fitfully.

Take the Holiday Tree Lighting, for example. Now, truly a world-class holiday event, professionally lit and sound-engineered, with marquee talent and a

picture-perfect tree at the center of it all, the "HTL" began as a tiny group of hardy, vocal souls gathering at 86th and East End, where the crowds now flock in early December.

"We enlisted a local choir-master to shepherd the flock back then," recalls Executive Director David D. Williams. "To spread the choral *continued on page 4*



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

A walk in the Park will give even the most casual visitor to Carl Schurz an idea of what the Carl Schurz Park Conservancy has been up to during the past several years: stonework repair, fence restoration, tree pruning, lawn maintenance, 'Big Belly' trash compactors, etc., etc. And yet, as always, it's the gardens that get the most notice. And the biggest smiles; the deepest sighs of delight.



While we continue to remind our Conservancy donors and friends that we turned a corner a few years ago in our focus on the WHOLE of Carl Schurz we have never ever taken our collective eye off the prize: the many gardens, plantings, woodlands and borders that clearly define what it is to visit Carl Schurz Park.

The gardens of the Park are the frosting in the Oreo.

Knowing this, and thanks to some botanical brilliance by the Conservancy's Development co-chair, Pat Nadosy, and her merry band of bloom identifiers and gardening photographers, we designed a special section of the Conservancy's website to satisfy the curiosity of those visitors to the Park who would really like to know what is growing all around them, season by season. We call it 'What's in Bloom' (WIB) and it is updated frequently.

Some of the plants, shrubs and, certainly, trees gained their toehold in Carl Schurz Park long before there was ever the need for the citizen caretakers of the Conservancy due to the dwindling budget of the Parks Department. Many others are youngsters, joining the sophisticated horticultural tapestry of this Park as the Conservancy develops its planting plans for the many Park gardens.

Cast an eye on WIB – or, better yet, head to the Park, tablet or smartphone in hand – and you'll quickly understand that Carl Schurz Park is a rich, evolving ecosystem of carefully chosen and tended living plants. With a supporting cast of grey squirrels and myriad birds. Take, for instance, a recent WIB on the conifers of the Park:

*The Eastern White Pine (Pinus strobus) is native to eastern North America and is the state tree of Maine. It is also known as Weymouth Pine, after Thomas, the Viscount of Weymouth who planted the first White Pine seeds in England in the early 1600's – they were not a success! We have two Eastern White Pines in Upper Peter Pan, one just northwest of the Gold Atlas Cedar and the other by the south air vent. There is a third on the southwest lawn (Rocktop Lawn) near the intersection of the four paths south of the Peter Pan Bridge.*

By the time you read this, you should be able to download and read a series of WIB's that will take you from season to season throughout the entire Park. Ground up.

There will be a quiz in the morning.

David D. Williams  
Executive Director

## A SHINGLE HAS BEEN HUNG

The Conservancy opened its first-ever office in April, 2013. Located on the ground floor of a walkup apartment building on York Avenue between East 85th and East 86th Streets, the office has a small garden in the back, appropriate for a Park Conservancy. And the office dog, Jack.

"The office has provided the Conservancy with a space in which to consolidate its operations, and enable the staff to work, as needed, with the organization's volunteers and Board," remarked Executive Director David Williams.

"It's also been quite a nice place to host small receptions for *The Indispensables*, the aforementioned volunteers!" he added. Important: anyone wishing to write to the Conservancy should use the organization's mailing address: 1483 York Avenue #20523, New York, NY 10075-8819. ☞



DAVID D. WILLIAMS

## ALEXANDER LEE JOINS THE CONSERVANCY STAFF



Alexander (Alex) Lee joined the staff of the Carl Schurz Park Conservancy in January of 2014. As the Conservancy's fulltime Executive Assistant, Alex reports to the Executive Director, working closely to support the programs of the organization's various committees and the requirements of its Board of Directors.

A graduate of the University of Vermont where he studied history, political science and sociology, Alex has interned at

the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity and The Common Good. A Correspondence Intern at the William J. Clinton Foundation, his interest in fighting poverty took him to a position with AmeriCorps VISTA.

"I am extraordinarily grateful for having been given the opportunity to assist David Williams, the Board, Ann Meschery, and volunteers in helping make Carl Schurz Park the best that it can be, so that it may continue to provide an urban oasis in New York City," notes Alex. "Since joining CSPC in January, I have been working on a number of very exciting projects including our donor database."

Visitors to the Park attending any of the Conservancy events will have a chance to meet Alex. ☞



## JAN COLUCCI: A VOLUNTEER FOR ALL SEASONS. AND EVENTS.

**T**hey wake up and smell the coffee. They drink the Kool-Aid. They come into the tent. And without them, the show would fold.

They're the volunteers for the Carl Schurz Park Conservancy, and the hours they collectively put in for the Park could run a small business 24/7.

A twenty-year resident of East End Avenue and a ten-year volunteer, **Jan Colucci** is a perfect example.

Jan was really able to catch the Conservancy bug and devote more time to volunteering once she retired from the NYC Department of Education where she held many positions: elementary school teacher, curriculum and literacy specialist and staff developer for schools on the Upper and Lower East Sides of Manhattan. She also prepared prospective teachers with their student teaching experience for the City University of NY. Presently she is consulting part time and tutoring at risk students in the neighborhood.

While many of the Conservancy volunteers garden in the Park, there are many who give to the community and the Park through their efforts on behalf of the Conservancy's numerous events.

For Jan, it was tunes.

"I was instantly drawn to the concert committee. I thought that was a good place to become involved because I love music," Jan recalled in a conversation with Executive Director, David D. Williams. "We first presented small chamber ensembles. But to broaden the appeal and open

up the music to the larger community, several of us met as a group in an apartment and discussed different genres. Some of us went out to the actual clubs and heard the performers in person. I'm proud of how far the concerts have come over the ten years and all the joy it brings to so many on warm summer nights."

"Now, you volunteer on a number of different committees, right?" David asked.

"Actually, it was contagious," Jan said. "Once I started I enjoyed it so much that I looked for the next area that I could get involved with and that was the SUNSET FILM FESTIVAL. And that was a lot of fun. Actually, EVERYTHING is fun in the Park. It's a way to meet your neighbors outdoors in community-based activities. It's just wonderful. I've become quite invested in the Park, and I urge other people to do so as well."

Jan's latest commitment to Conservancy events is the Gracie Square Art Show.

"I'm also working on administrative tasks for the Gracie Square Art Show with co-chairs **Terry Lamb** and **Ann Meschery**. It's become a real pleasure to work with them and witness their dedication and expertise in creating what has become one of the top 100 art shows in the nation. It takes one year and 60 volunteers to plan, develop and execute the Show. Can you imagine?!"

Jan is also a donor to the Conservancy.

"I feel that if you don't have the time it's important to give

because that's how we achieve our goal here, to bring something beautiful to the community. If you can do both, that's wonderful. And I found I was able to do both. Gratefully. And happily."

In thinking about why she has committed her time and financial support to the Conservancy, Jan summed it up this way:

"It's become a passion of mine.

The people I work closely with have become a family. I've made wonderful friends through volunteering and it has given me a way to give back to my beautiful community. The park has always been a wonderful way to celebrate our fine neighborhood and it's always been my joy to help others become a part of that celebration."

Applause. Applause. 📷



Jan Colucci and David Williams.

ROBERT ENGLEBRIGHT





DAN NELKEN



ROBERT ENGLEBRIGHT



*continued from page 1*

wealth, we decided to head up and down East End, singing fa-la-la-la-la from block to block, but without much response from the residents above. We couldn't be heard through double-paned windows so, after several silent nights of trying we settled back at 86th Street."

**B**it by bit the event was enhanced. Director of In-park Events, **Ann Meschery** and her then co-chair, **Maureen Moreau**, auditioned top-flight talent to raise the bar and help lead the community in song.

First act to lead the way was the Brearley Singers, then The Young People's Chorus of New York, both inspired choices to ratchet up the professionalism of the event. Then, as now, Orbital Brass, a NYC group of young professional performers,

provided the quintessentially holiday backup.

After three years, Ann and her committee brought Cantori New York, an equally inspired choice, to the mall steps. Red scarves and all.

"To select these choirs, many hours were spent scouring the internet for appropriate groups; listening to YouTube performances; honing from a list of about 200 finalists; and then auditioning. Maureen joined me in attending concerts of the finalists. So, what began very modestly has grown to be one of the surrounding community's most cherished events of the season."

Come January, the same Park mall where over a thousand neighbors gather around the Conservancy holiday tree, becomes a military-precision, two-day work zone as Parks

staff and dozens of Conservancy volunteers burn calories mulching the trees that the community drags to the Park.

**I**t's called MULCHFEST, and it was not always so well coordinated.

Once upon a time, in a MULCHFEST long, long ago, the truck, loaded down with thousands of pounds of fresh mulch, got stuck in the mud near Gracie Mansion. That was also the year for Parks to clarify to Sanitation brass on site that yes, volunteers and Parks staff had the City's blessing to take away Christmas trees from the curb and transport them to the Park for recycling as mulch.

But today MULCHFEST is very different, thanks to energetic volunteers, helpful Parks staff and MULCHFEST Commanders **Jill Byatt** and **Ginger Holton**.

"MULCHFEST in Carl Schurz Park has its origins in the early 2000's when a handful of volunteers, inspired by the example of Prospect Park, began to drag discarded Christmas trees out of trash piles and into the Park for recycling into clean, no-cost mulch," said Jill. "Since those early days, the event has grown and evolved as more volunteers joined the effort, contributing their enthusiasm for the environment and their organizational skills to create today's well-oiled MULCHFEST machine."

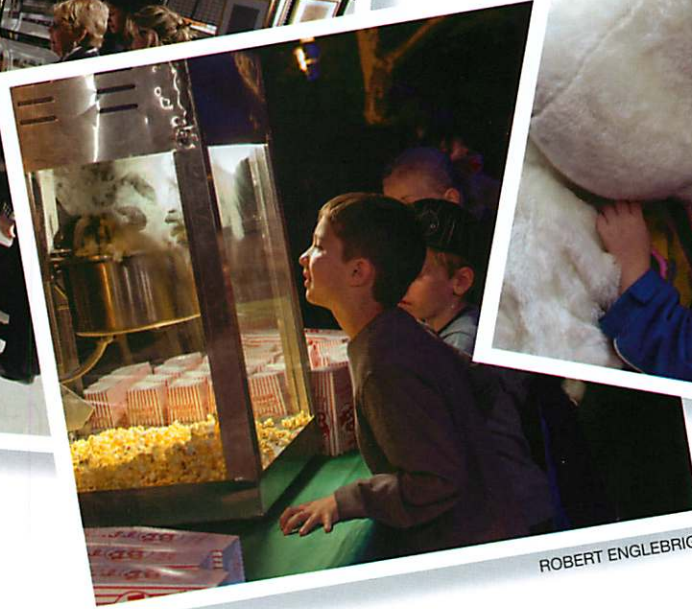
**A**nd this year, that machine chipped over 2,000 tannenbaums, creating a lovely smell abroad in our land. And nourishing its good earth.

When "living-is-easy" time rolls around, it's time for music and movies in the Park.





DAN NELKEN



ROBERT ENGLEBRIGHT



“Half an hour before each concert, or each movie, we begin to clutch; that after all the preparations, the audience won’t materialize,” admitted Williams. “But, unlike the big, big parks of the City, this is a community park. Everyone lives a few blocks away and they know that this is pretty much their park. It’s easy to find a chair or a bench or a square of turf on which to settle down and enjoy the show. No mad dash or 5:00 a.m. spreading of a blanket here.”

And again, for the SUMMER SOUND concerts, the talent is world class. Performers have included **Bucky and John Pizzarelli** (two years in a row), **Swingtime Big Band**, **Jabacule**, etc., etc.

Again, Ann: “I was proud to join fellow Carl Schurz Park enthusiasts, **Susan Schrenzel**, **Lori Montana** and **Bernie May**

as a co-founder of the Concerts Committee. Our little quartet staged the first Summer Sounds concert series in 2005, very modestly with a small battery operated sound system and musicians that were personal friends. That first year, the audience numbered 300-400.”

**F**or the SUNSET FILM FESTIVAL, the Conservancy contracted with FRESH AIR FLICS years ago to handle the Big Screen (worth coming early to watch the crew inflate and secure) and projection. And the popcorn.

The Conservancy contracts with a cartage company and a chair rental service for pretty much all events. But none of it could or would come together without the Conservancy volunteers.

The 2014 slate of summer movies is themed, as always.

This year it’s *USA!USA!*, with Albert Brooks’ classic and strangely timely 1985 *Lost in America*; and a perennial family favorite *An American Tail*.

And for tunes, it’ll be an encore return of **Kenn Morr** and **Swingtime Big Band**.

Of all the events that the Conservancy presents for the community’s enjoyment, the Gracie Square Art Show is the granddaddy of them all. Now in its 42nd year, the Art Show is also a successful fundraiser for the Conservancy, netting close to \$30,000, all of which is turned back into the Park.

Somewhere along the line, from quiet little fair with a handful of artists exhibiting their work, to today’s topflight, nationally-recognized two-day affair, the Show became a must for members of the community. And the tri-state area.

**S**aid Co-Chair **Terry Lamb**, now in her fourth year co-chairing with Ann Meschery, “The Gracie Square Art Show is now one of the top 100 outdoor shows in the country as a result of the positive feedback from the exhibiting artists. The success of the show is all due to the tremendous effort and dedication of the volunteers and the participating artists.

“It is my great pleasure, and honor, to serve as the Co-Chair of the show,” she added.

The work that it took to secure the show’s place in the sun, “... required not only increasing the number of high quality artists but upping the attendance over the weekend of the show,” says Ann.

“Along with an enthusiastic group of 60 volunteers, we got the grassroots *continued on page 6*





DAN NELKEN



ROBERT ENGLEBRIGHT

promotional effort into full swing, distributing flyers at subway and bus stops and supermarkets on weekends. The website was re-designed into the most attractive of all art fairs with a state-of-the-art administrative site that allowed artists to apply and pay online; a jury composed of arts professionals and collectors was formed to judge the applicants; we attended arts shows in the surrounding region to solicit top artists to enter the show; and we are putting testimonials and a new video on the home page of the website."

**T**he children of the community get into the Art Show act with their sidebar activity, a hands-on series of art projects the Conservancy arranges with the Museum of Modern Art. It is just one of

a raft of kids programs that stretch from spring into fall: "The Playground events such as the Egg Hunt and the Hayride have become family traditions," says **Lisa Latcholia**, Playground Committee Co-Chair and Conservancy Board Secretary. "It's a great way to come together as a community and create memories for the whole family in a way that feels very small town in the big city."

Those childhood "moveable feasts" also include afternoon story-time readings and concerts in the playground and a park-wide Harvest Festival, including a hayride and pumpkin patch.

"The founding DNA of the Conservancy was its playground committee. It was formed to raise funds to restore a playground that had fallen into disrepair," says Williams.

**A**s the Conservancy begins to once again assess the condition of the Park playground, it continues to sponsor programs that bring families together, tailor-made for young attention spans and busy little hands.

Finally, for kids of all ages, there is the Conservancy's annual Halloween Howl and Healthy Hound Fair.

"The Howl started as a casual dog costume contest in the large dog run and has grown into a proper event with wranglers and over 300 dogs participating in the contest," notes Howl Co-Chair, **Samantha Schmidt**.

With its coven of witch judges (all professional fashion industry pros), led by longtime Conservancy volunteer, **Virginia Borland**, the Howl contestants are evaluated on as rigorous a

scale as canine-ly possible. The Howl and the Gracie Square Art Show a few weeks earlier, are the two events that generate net funds for the Conservancy. This, too, was a work in progress:

**I**n its early days, the Howl was feeling its way, finally hitting its stride so to speak, as word got out," says David Williams. "When we added the Healthy Hound Fair, and asked for entry donations, the Howl became another helpful source of funds for Conservancy operations.

Sam and her Co-Chair, **Brenda Sauer**, have fine-tuned the event, controlling the doggy chaos. And, magically, end the two hour event each year at 3:00 p.m. sharp. ☺



# CARL SCHURZ PARK CONSERVANCY EVENT CALENDAR!

ROBERT ENGLEBRIGHT



## 2014 VOLUNTEER GARDENING SCHEDULE

Join your neighbors and pitch in! Volunteer as a CSPC gardener:

**Saturdays from  
9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

Location: East 86th Street  
Mall at East End Avenue

Please note:

The Carl Schurz Park Volunteer Gardeners is an adult group that meets monthly to work in the Park. Students or children who wish to participate must be accompanied by an adult or parent with whom they work.

**May 17**

**June 14**

**July 12**

**August 9**

**September 13**

**October 18**

**November 8**

**December 13**

All Saturdays. No Rain Dates

**Saturday, May 10**

**9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

**PLANT SALE**

Rain or shine

## CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

**Tuesdays,  
July 8, 15, 22 & 29  
4:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
SUMMER  
SANDBOX SERIES  
Weather permitting

**Saturday & Sunday,  
September 27 & 28  
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**  
MoMA IN THE  
PLAYGROUND  
Rain or shine



DAN NELKEN

**Saturday, October 11  
12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.**  
HARVEST FESTIVAL  
Pumpkin Patch,  
Hayride and Family concert  
in the Playground

## SUMMER SOUNDS

The Conservancy's eagerly anticipated SUMMER SOUNDS concert series returns to the John Finley Walk again this year. All concerts held, weather permitting, atop the East 86th Street staircase, overlooking the East River. Limited seating on a first come, first serve basis.

**Wednesday, July 9  
7:00-8:30 p.m.**  
KENN MORR AND BAND

**Wednesday, August 6  
7:00-8:30 p.m.**  
STEVE SHAIMAN AND  
SWINGTIME BIG BAND  
Back for a *fifth* summer!

## SUNSET FILM FESTIVAL

Head to the East River for the "USA! USA" Film Festival 2014. Movies start at 8:30 p.m. in the Basketball/Hockey Courts  
Limited Seating  
FREE POPCORN!

**Tuesday, July 29  
AN AMERICAN TAIL**



**Tuesday, August 12  
Albert Brooks' LOST IN AMERICA**



Visit the City's premier open-air Art Show, now in its 42nd year!

**Saturday & Sunday,  
September 27 & 28  
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

East End Avenue from East 84th St. to East 88th St.  
[www.graciesquareartshow.info](http://www.graciesquareartshow.info)

## HALLOWEEN HOWL & HEALTHY HOUND FAIR



All sizes of dogs in all sorts of costumes compete for a variety of prizes. And FAME! Now, for the fifth year in a row, visit the HALLOWEEN HOWL HEALTHY HOUND FAIR to learn all about the healthy ways to keep your Best Friend in the Best of Health!!

**Sunday, October 19  
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Location:  
Basketball/Hockey Courts  
Rain date: October 26

## HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING

A beloved family tradition. Guest Choir, Cantori, New York with Orbital Brass Band Hot Chocolate, Cookies, Candy Canes!!

**Sunday, December 7  
5:00 to 6:00 p.m.**

Location: East 86th Street and East End Avenue  
Held snow, rain or balmy weather!



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT

The Carl Schurz Park Conservancy is grateful to all those who made a contribution between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2013. Without your vital support, our efforts at improving our Park and offering annual events would be greatly diminished.

### Individuals

#### \$50,000 and above

Pat and Peter Nadosy  
Anonymous (1)

#### \$25,000 to \$49,999

Larry and Judy Howard

#### \$10,000 to \$24,999

Sandye Berger  
Brook and Roger Berling  
Lisa and Dick Cashin  
Donald M. and  
Mary Gordon Roberts  
Joan Haffenreffer Bartsch  
and David Bartsch  
Edward and Caroline Hyman\*  
Larry and Mary McCaffrey\*  
Fiona and Eric Rudin

#### \$5,000 to \$9,999

Ginette and Joshua Becker  
Sarah Beatty Buller and  
Mark Buller  
Stewart and Cornelia Clifford  
Robert F. Gossett, Jr.  
Barney and Julia Hallingby  
Mel Immergut and  
Barbara Lyne  
Christopher and  
Cathy Lawrence  
Leo S. Walsh Foundation  
Evie Muller  
Frank and Francine Murphy  
Beth Rudin DeWoody  
Richard E. Salomon and  
Laura Landro\*  
Marvin and Mimi Sandler  
Ora and Howard Smith  
Margaret D. Sullivan  
Clare and Jerry Thomas

### Benefit Dinner Hosts

Gene Bernstein and Kathy Walsh  
Bob and Julie Daum  
Richard and Francesca Diamond  
Mike and Beth Fascitelli  
Jack and Dolly Geary  
John and Kazie Harvey  
Edward and Caroline Hyman  
Larry and Mary McCaffrey  
Clarke and Whitney Murphy  
Rick Salomon and Laura Landro  
Bill and Fay Shutzer  
Roland and Carla Villacorta

Alan and Barbara Washkowitz  
Leonard and Beth Wilf

#### \$2,500 to \$4,999

George and Evelyn Benjamin  
Steven Broder  
Peter and Faith Coolidge  
Christa D'Alimonte and  
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Susan and Philip Heide  
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Joseph and Barbara Lane  
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Rachel Maman Kish  
Margaret Mellon Hitchcock  
Foundation  
Maureen Moreau  
Barbara Nessim and  
Jules Demchick  
Robert and Patricia O'Brien  
Yvonne S. Quinn  
Kenneth and Ellen Roman

Victoria Schonfeld and  
Victor Friedman  
Dr. Monica and  
Mr. Andrew Weinberg  
Stacey and Gregg Weinstein  
Brenda Zimmer  
Anonymous (1)

#### \$1,000 to \$2,499

Kevin and James Abernathy  
Eric and Naomi Altmann  
Doug and Elena Atkin  
Edward and  
Steena Auchincloss  
Gene Bernstein and  
Kathy Walsh\*  
Robert and Christine Beshar  
LeeAnn and Jeffrey Black  
Thomas and Marcia Berger  
Susan and Richard Braddock  
Susan and Donald Brant  
Cynthia Breen and  
Laurie Dowley

Pat and Stanley Brilliant  
Mr. and Mrs. Alexander  
Brodsky  
Elena D. Brody  
John and Kristin Clark  
Leslie and Jim Craige  
Kenny and Alex Creed  
Robert and Diane Cummings  
Susan and Greg Danilow  
John and Jodie Eastman  
Robert and Margaret Fagenson  
Thomas and  
Miriam Farmakis  
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Fredric Leopold  
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Alan Jones  
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 Ranjan and Chandrika Tandon  
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 Lenard and Fern Tessler  
 John and Louisa Troubh  
 Carla and Roland Villacorta\*  
 Monica and Andrew Vogelstein  
 Cecilia and Wade Warner  
 F. T. Wegmann  
 Marc and Giulia Weisman  
 Salvatore J. Zizza

## \$500 to \$999

Ellen Asher  
 Maureen Duffy Benzinger  
 Deborah Berke and  
 Peter D. McCann, M.D.  
 Stan and Susan W. Bernstein  
 Fritz Beshar and Peter Lehner  
 Mark C. Binting  
 Lane Brettschneider  
 Ruth Calvin Scharf  
 Dr. Michela Catalano and  
 Dr. Stephen Baum  
 Mario and Carolyn Cibelli  
 Carol and Ed Cimilluca  
 Jeff and Connie Collier  
 Kirk and Peggy Davenport  
 Bettina and Brian Decker  
 Carla and Frank DeSimone  
 Jordan and Kim Dickstein  
 David and Carol Domina  
 Elizabeth and Anthony Enders  
 Sharon Flescher  
 Thomas and Lori Guarnera





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 Russel Huang  
 Walter and Judith Hunt  
 Karen and Peter Jakes  
 Stephen Johansen  
 Robert and Cheryl M. Johnson  
 Pamela Jones  
 Kenneth Martin and  
 Christine Hepburn Foundation  
 Janice Kim and Sammy Suzuki  
 Steven Klugman and  
 Mary Faucher  
 Joel Kurtzberg  
 Tom and Terry Lamb  
 Lawrence E. Lewis, III  
 Leonard Majzlin and

Carol Hall  
 Steve and Dorian Mecir  
 Edward Miller  
 Susan Milsom  
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 Ann M. Packard  
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 Kristin Sansone and Jim Helmus  
 Paula Sarnoff Oreck  
 Jeffrey and Cari Schnipper  
 Peggy and Crossan Seybolt  
 Anne Alexis Cote Taylor  
 Howard Teich  
 Mary and David Tobin  
 Liz Tominey and Jeff Reed  
 Eugen Vartolomei  
 Frederic and Robin Withington

**\$250 to \$499**  
 Marion Bachrach and  
 Jonathan Siegfried  
 Mitchell and Ronda Benson  
 Ann and Joel Berson  
 Roberta Blick  
 Heleen Brody and Jeffrey Lang  
 Jim and Joan Burke  
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 Deborah and Peter Carroll  
 Thea S. Cohen  
 Jan Colucci  
 Philip Cusick  
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 Agatha Nody  
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 Mrs. Marcia Horowitz  
 Anthony and Joan Japha  
 Paul Jeruchimowitz  
 Thomas and Simi Kahn  
 Arnold and Nina Kling  
 Eileen Koretz and  
 Joseph Giampaolo



Alfred and Carol Landess  
Ira and Ruth Langer  
Eric and Emmie Lee  
Kathleen Leisure  
Peter Levenson  
Robert and Penny Lieberberg  
Sandra Lotz Fisher  
Maria Lucca and  
Richard K. Carrier  
Shereen Lee Margolis  
Mr. Peter Matson and  
Ms. Susan Colgan  
David W. Mayo  
Sarah and Charles Morgan  
Karen J. Nelson  
Brenda Neubauer Straus  
Lori Neushotz  
Jennifer Nilles  
Janice and Yoji Nimura  
Edward and Ellen Oelsner  
Patty and Peter Paine  
Donna and Cary Park  
Coles H. Phinizy, Jr.  
Maryann Popiel, M.D.  
Ellen and Bruce Ressler  
Frederick Rohn and  
Frances Lipa  
Simon Roosevelt  
David and  
Jeannette Rubenstein  
Brendan and Jill Ryan  
Suzanne Sanders Kuperman  
Kenneth Scheff  
Elizabeth Schriever and  
John Brandow  
David Sherman  
Pamela Shiells and  
Gary Heinze  
Carolyn Skiffington and  
Gary Schechter  
Oscar Sloterbeck  
Ward and Carolyn Smith  
Dr. and Mrs. Harold Spalter  
Susan W. Stachelberg  
Elliot Sussman, M.D. and  
Nancy Cromer Grayson  
Naomi and Jaime Taicher  
Gerald and Melissa Uram  
Jonathan Vapnek  
Annette Vass  
Mary Kay Vyskocil  
Arete Warren  
Rhona Landau and  
Steven Weissman

Mary Wheeler  
Anonymous (3)

## Businesses and Schools

**\$5000 and above**  
The Brearley School  
The Chapin School  
CityMD

**\$2500 to \$4999**  
180 East End Avenue  
Care.com

**\$1000 and under**  
Blue Buffalo Company, LTD.  
Dorian's Seafood Market  
Eric Landgraf Florist  
Insomnia Cookies  
Math for America  
Monrovia  
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Ottomanelli Brothers  
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\* In addition to their gifts to the Conservancy, these individuals generously hosted "Party on the Park" dinners in their homes.

And our thanks to over 565 contributors whose donations of \$1 to \$249 totaled more than \$40,400.



ROBERT ENGLEBRIGHT




## LET THERE BE MULCH

The 2014 Carl Schurz Park Mulchfest, held on January 11th and 12th, was by far our best ever! Friends and neighbors watched as thousands of local discarded Christmas trees were recycled into 10 huge truckloads of fragrant mulch for our Park.

Starting the day after Christmas, dozens of stalwart Conservancy volunteers, organized by co-chairs **Jill Byatt** and **Ginger Holton**, dragged trees from all over the area to Carl Schurz Park. On Mulchfest day volunteers working alongside the NYC Parks Department helped to orchestrate the chipping, which lasted through the weekend.

It was a joyful occasion with many families coming to participate in this most welcome, green community effort. Piles of wreaths and swags were deconstructed and trees detinseled by “Santa’s Workshop” volunteers in an effort to produce the cleanest mulch possible.


Conservancy volunteers have spent the winter months spreading the mountains of fragrant chips to needy locations. So next time you are walking by the Park and are delighted by the welcoming smell of pine, you will know where it came from.  —Judy Howard



## INTREPID NORTH LAWN GARDENER MILT VERSTANDIG

**F**ar away, in the land that is North of Gracie Mansion, works one of the Conservancy’s most intrepid gardeners. Milt Verstandig has cared for the huge northern most garden beds there for the past 7 years.

Beloved for its abundance of plant material and absolute riotous color, this garden is perhaps the finest example of organized chaos in Carl Schurz Park. A plant lover who believes that all plant material should be respected, Milt often times brings in home grown seedlings or plants that he has “saved” from other parts of the park. They all find secure homes in his garden beds.

Lacking an easy supply of water has not daunted Milt’s efforts. In fact, you can often observe him hand carrying multiple heavy containers to water his most vulnerable plants. This is no easy feat for a man whose slim frame seems to bend with the wind. Working mostly alone, Milt has managed to transform this area into one of the most eye catching spots in the park. We at the Conservancy and in the neighborhood applaud him for his yeoman efforts! 

—Judy Howard



DAVID D. WILLIAMS

Diane Olenick mulches with the best of them.



## IMPROVING OUR PARK'S SOIL ONE LEAF AT A TIME!

**M**any park lovers view our trees and shrubs as our most valuable assets, but without good soil, our plants would suffer. In a public park, the soil is always under attack from the forces of compaction; humans, dogs, machines. Compacted soil prevents roots from growing, prevents water from flowing under the surface to feed roots, prevents worms, beetles and microorganisms (bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes, microarthropods) from moving in the soil to aerate and enrich the nutrient composition.

One way to amend or improve our soil is to add compost often. Another is to apply mulch to the soil in garden beds and on pathways.

To produce compost, our volunteer gardeners collect dried

leaves (the carbon-rich 'brown') and green leaves from annuals, perennials and weeds (the nitrogen rich 'green'). These are mixed together in a compost 'bin' (stakes with a wire surround) in a rough ratio of three parts brown to one part green. Invisible to the naked eye, microorganisms live happily in a well combined compost pile, extracting energy from the green material and adding energy and nutrients to the pile through their droppings, and aerating as they move.

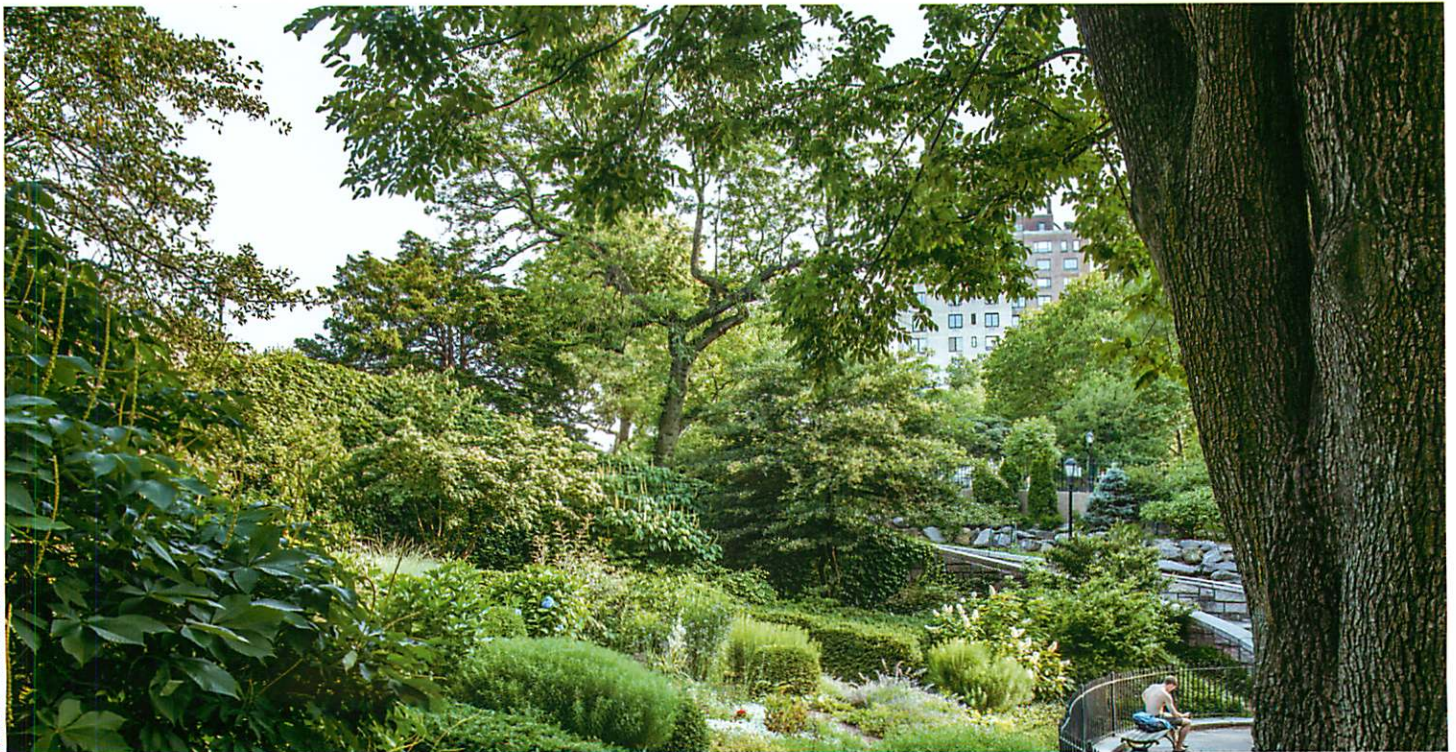
As the pile decomposes through the actions of the decomposers, it grows smaller and richer in nutrients. Ideally, we would layer the green leaves with the brown leaves, but in the real world, trees shed their leaves in the fall and plants green up in the spring and summer. The

ideal is a three-bin system so that we can pitch-fork the ingredients from the starter bin into the working bin in the right ratios. The third bin is for the finished dark and crumbly 'black gold.' Since our space is limited, we also have single bins that are either leaf bins or compost bins. Decomposition happens, but it takes longer than in a three-bin set up.

Visitors often ask our volunteer gardeners whether mulch and compost are the same and why we mulch. The Conservancy purchases mulch, the Parks Department provides mulch, and we create mulch from our leaf bins. Partially decomposed leaves produce 'leaf mold,' a high-nutrient mulch. Bartlett Tree leaves us wood chips after they prune our trees and chip

the debris. In the spring and summer, leaf mold and 'soil conditioning mulch' keep weeds at bay and keep moisture in the soil. In the winter, wood chips are used after the first hard frost to moderate the soil temperature. The worst winters for plants are those with highly variable temperatures. When soil shifts from being frozen to thawing as temperatures change, it can heave, tearing plant roots apart. Mulch reduces the incidence of heaving and enhances the survival of our plants.

We should be ever mindful of Franklin Roosevelt's statement, on signing the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act in 1936: "The history of every Nation is eventually written in the way in which it cares for its soil." 🌱 —Pat Nadosy



ROBERT ENGLEBRIGHT



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ITS GENEROUS DONORS, PAGE 8**

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Louise added that the events the Conservancy sponsors are integral in her and her family’s appreciation of Carl Schurz Park.

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Alex Lee  
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New York, NY 10075-8819  
212.459.4455





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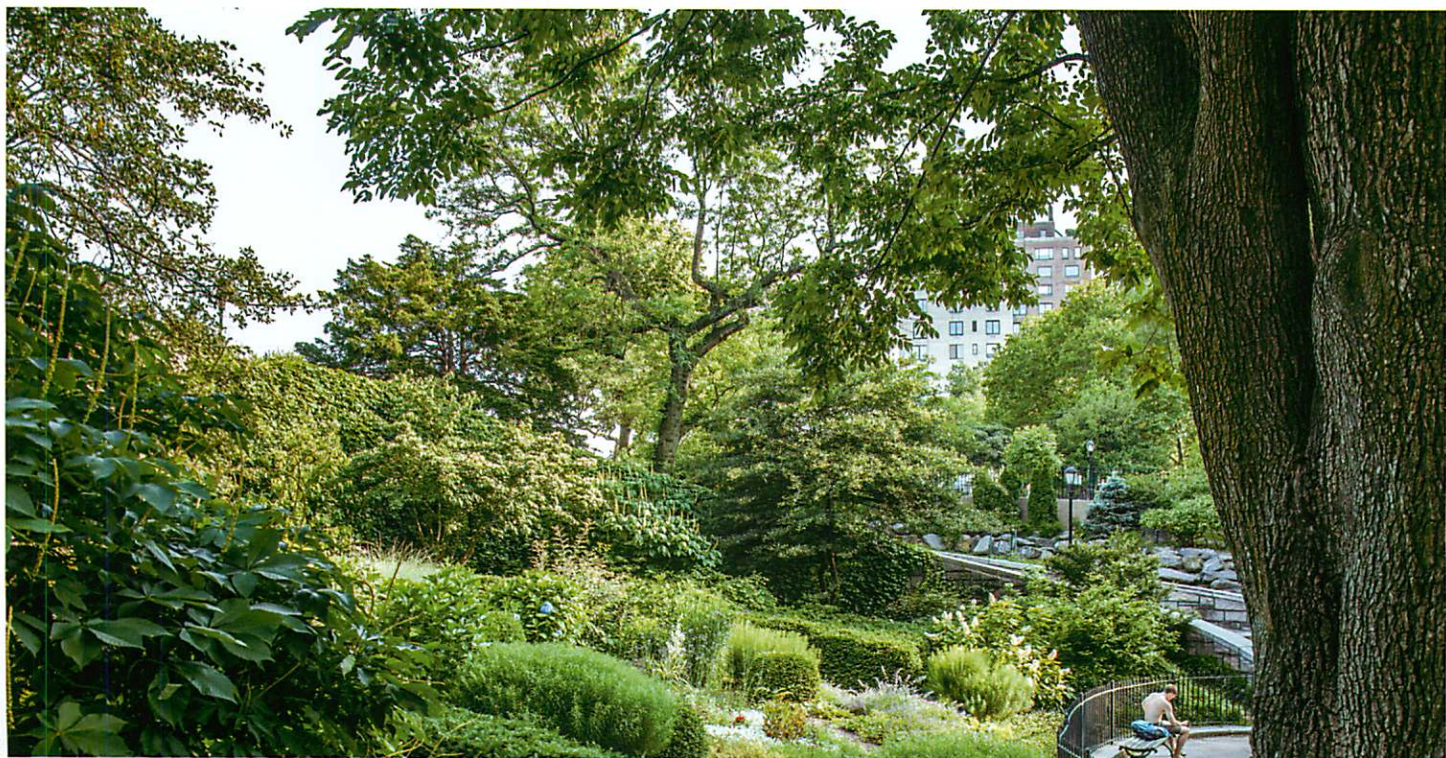
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ROBERT ENGLEBRIGHT



# SQUIRREL WRANGLING: THINKING AHEAD OF THE SQUIRREL CURVE



Park Notes asked Bill Adler to write something about squirrels in public parks. The New York Times wrote an article in April about the third edition of his book, *Outwitting Squirrels: 101 Cunning Stratagems to Reduce Dramatically the Egregious Misappropriation of Seed from Your Birdfeeder by Squirrels*, that included a photo of Bill (with squirrel) in Carl Schurz Park.

We were delighted that he agreed to write a few words.

Earlier in the spring the Carl Schurz Park Conservancy was pleased that Bill, and his sister Diane, included the Conservancy in the memorial wishes for their father, well-known writer and Carl Schurz neighbor, William Adler, who died in February. Thanks to the generosity of the friends and family of William Adler, his memory will live on and flourish in a Park he, and his children, loved so much.

And now, about those squirrels... "Squirrels are naturally shy about people, Bill writes. "They will do their utmost to avoid us. They will run in the opposite direction. They always have the

nearest tree in mind.

"Except. Except when it comes to food. Squirrels lose all timidity, at least for a few minutes, when they see something that they're interested in eating, even if it's in our hand. That would be okay as a theory, but squirrels quickly learn that people are not harmful when they have food. And so the cycle begins. One well meaning individual who thinks that squirrels are cute (and well, they are cute) offers a squirrel a nut. Then another squirrel appears. And another.

"As the squirrels are being trained, people are being trained, too. One day we happen to have a handful of nuts or an unopened Snicker's bar in our pocket. We

extend our hand with the nuts toward a wandering squirrel. If we're wise, we drop the nuts before the squirrel reaches our hand. (Squirrels can't always see the difference between nuts and fingers, and you can guess the result.) The cute squirrel eats the nuts. Immediately after eating, shyness takes over the squirrel's behavior and the squirrel runs back to the nearest tree. The next day we come back to the park, this time a deliberate plan to feed squirrels. The squirrels are more than happy to go along with this plan.

"The cycle continues.

"There's really only one way to break this cycle of people feeding squirrels, and that's to

get at the root cause of the problem: We like animals. With generally one exception: pigeons. Not that pigeons are unattractive, but there are so many of them. If pigeons were rarer, then nobody would bother feeding squirrels because we'd be keeping an eye out for pigeons all the time.

"The solution? Everyone who owns parakeets should set them loose. Once parakeets are roaming the skies above our parks, we will lose all interest in feeding squirrels, and the cycle will be broken.

"Of course there's a problem or two with this idea. Until we solve those problems, the squirrels won't have to worry about their food supply running low." 🐿



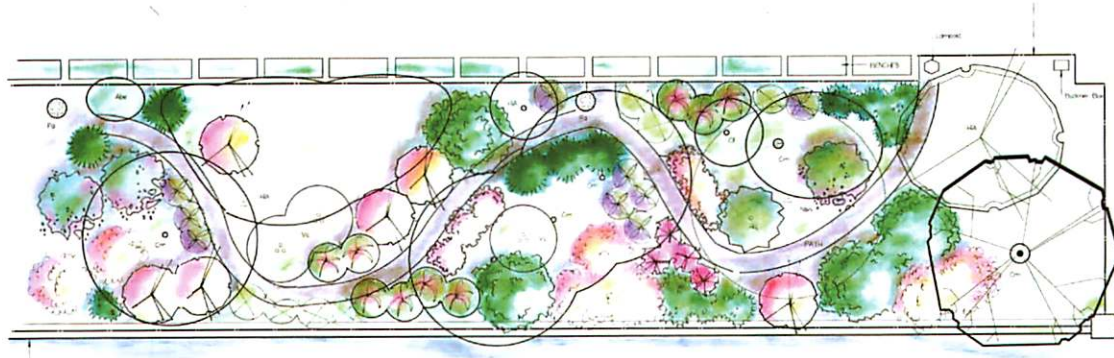
DAN NELKEN



## WOODLAND ON THE WATER

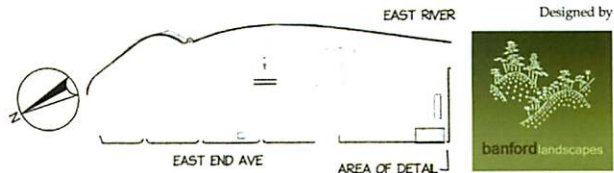
### A sustainable garden

The Carl Schurz Park Conservancy: Working to improve your park



Plant List:


Aronia arbutifolia  
 Clethra alnifolia  
 Fothergilla major  
 Hydrangea quercifolia  
 Ilex opaca  
 Pieris floribunda  
 Rhodoendron 'PJM'  
 Symphoricarpos  
 Taxus x media Densiformis  
 Viburnum acerifolium



## THE DAWN OF A NEW SUSTAINABLE WOODLAND GARDEN

The Conservancy has announced the installation of a Woodland Garden on the water. Beginning in the spring, Park visitors will notice the transformation near the East 84th Street entrance, in the wooded area that runs along East End Avenue. During the catastrophic weather in 2012, a mature tree fell, leaving a large bare spot in this garden. A few understory trees and shrubs remain, but overall, the area has little diversity and is not consistently maintained.

The plan to create a sustainable woodland is to diversify the canopy in a way that will have ecological benefits for birds, bees and butterflies. The sustainability factor comes from selecting plants that are drought and shade tolerant and require few resources to maintain.

In 2013, a donation was given to purchase a new tree for the garden and a *Nyssa sylvatica* 'Wildfire' was planted. *Nyssa* has multi-season interest with blue fruit and vivid fall color, providing food and a good nesting habitat for birds. This spring, a diverse understory of beneficial native and adapted shrubs will be planted, including *Clethra*, *Viburnum* and *Aronia*, to name a few. The Woodland Garden was designed by Banford Weissmann, a certified Landscape Designer, and the Seasonal Gardener for the Park. An interactive design can be found on her company website at [www.banfordlandscapes.com/interactive%20map.html](http://www.banfordlandscapes.com/interactive%20map.html) 



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