



Tudor City Greens News

Volume XXIX • Issue 1 • June 2017 • 5 Tudor City Place, #1-E NYC 10017 • TudorCityGreens.org

Anniversary Issue

North Park 90th Anniversary



North Park as seen from The Manor

90 YEARS AGO on September 30, 1927, the North Park opens on the same day as Prospect Tower and The Manor.

Designed by Sheffield Arnold, the North Park is originally more lawn than park. It's said that Fred French is hedging his bets, with future development of the lot still a possibility. However, French eventually recognizes both parks' unique worth, and so they remain parks – and mainstays of Tudor City advertising – thereafter.

In its original design, the North Park is accessed through a pitched-

roof gatehouse opening onto an oval graveled walkway with a fountain at its center. Another gravel path leads to a vine-covered pergola outfitted with English-style garden furniture. The remainder of the park is lawn, with some newly planted trees and a walkway around the perimeter. Dogs are banned, but children are allowed – there's a nursery school just around the corner.

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The gatehouse entrance

Tudor City Greens 30th Anniversary

30 YEARS AGO in 1987, Tudor City Greens is incorporated to assume ownership and responsibility of Tudor City's parks under the auspices of The Trust for Public Land, a national nonprofit conservation organization. At the time, most of the complex's apartment buildings are in the process of being converted to cooperative ownership by the sponsor, Time Equities.

Time Equities agrees to donate the development rights to The Trust for Public Land, and Tudor City Greens is formed as a local land trust to own and maintain the parks after all their development rights are extinguished. In addition, Tudor City Greens grants a conservation easement limiting park use to recreational and cultural purposes, ensuring that the parks will remain forever green.

Today, the parks provide a lush respite for Tudor City residents, and, although privately owned, are open to the general public.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER SPRING 2017

Hello Everyone,

Tudor City Greens, Inc., is 30 years old this year. Founded in 1987, it is a community of volunteers comprised of its Board of Directors representing Tudor City buildings and the Tudor City Association, and community members who participate in events, work in the gardens, and provide support through financial contributions.

An independent non-profit organization, Tudor City Greens, Inc. makes day-to-day decisions about activities, park maintenance, and budgets, guided by its by-laws and mission statement. Our endowment generates 20-30% operating income, the remainder of which comes from annual donations from Tudor City buildings, the Association and the community. We are grateful to foundations such as the Ford Foundation, for their generous support, as well as grants from other sources.

Volunteers are the strength of the Greens. Directors, Officers and community volunteers collaborate with hands-on work and financial support. Information on how to volunteer can be found on the back of this newsletter. If you wish to become involved in our activities, visit our website www.TudorCityGreens.org to register or just come out and introduce yourselves to us on planting days or to our Wednesday morning garden workers. Community is important. Our parks provide an opportunity to strengthen our community, as does the public nature of our private parks.

Roland M. Peracca Jr.

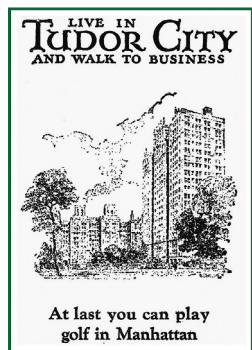
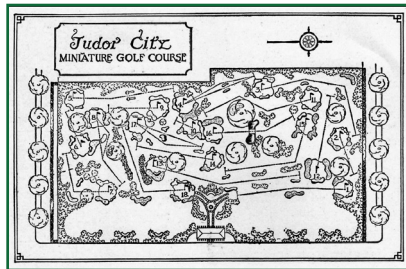
PRESIDENT

**Have a suggestion
or comment? Contact us at:
TudorCityGreens@gmail.com**

Follow us on Facebook!
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Miniature Golf in Midtown

90 YEARS AGO in 1927, an 18-hole miniature golf course opens on the future site of the South Park. Miniature golf – a scaled-down version of the real thing, focusing on putting – has taken America by storm in the '20s, and the craze allows the French Company to parlay a temporarily vacant lot into a publicity goldmine.



At that time, much of the complex is still under heavy construction, so the “Tom Thumb” course helps distract from the chaos around it. The French Company bills it as “the most expensive course for its area in the world, occupying land worth over a million dollars.”

Laid out on grass, the course is a par forty-three covering 330 yards, with a concrete-lined water hazard as its centerpiece. Other hazards included sand traps and dog-legs, as well as gate and bridge obstructions. The course is lit for nighttime play, with a local pro on call for private lessons.

By 1930, most of the Tudor City construction is complete, just as the miniature golf craze begins to wane. The land is redeveloped into the South Park.

John McKean, An Appreciation



McKean's bullhorn

37 YEARS AGO on Memorial Day weekend, 1980, developer Harry Helmsley dispatches a construction crew to prepare the North Park for demolition. Helmsley, who owns most of Tudor City – including the parks – has long threatened to build an apartment tower on the site.

Enter community organizer John McKean, who takes to the street with a bullhorn and rallies enough residents to halt the bulldozers.

A major figure in the parks' history, McKean is a real estate executive who lives in

The Manor. He retires in 1973, just as Helmsley announces his plans to replace the two private parks with apartment towers. McKean founds the Tudor City Tenants Association. “We need to preserve our two existing pocket parks, indeed what our city needs is more open parkland,” he says, “not more steel and concrete monsters.” If rezoning efforts fail, “we’ll go to court and seek an injunction against Mr. Helmsley.”

Suits and countersuits fly throughout the 1970s, with no resolution, until that fateful 1980 weekend. McKean immediately files a restraining order, and residents camp out in the parks to guard them until it is approved.

The legal battle continues until 1985, when Helmsley, weary of the bad press it is generating, sells off his interests in the complex. Tudor City – and its parks – are landmarked as a New York City Historic District in 1988.

McKean remains President of the Tudor City Association until his death in 1993. A plaque honoring his inestimable contribution to the community is installed in the North Park the following year.

Street Widened, Parks Narrowed

68 YEARS AGO in 1949, work begins on widening Tudor City Place, part of many upgrades to the neighborhood concurrent with the arrival of the United Nations. To widen the street means narrowing the parks by 22 feet, causing an immediate uproar in the complex.

City planners claim the project is necessary for two reasons: the street's too narrow for emergency vehicles to navigate, and the new Tudor City Bridge (replacing a 19th-century tunnel) requires a wider street to accommodate its design.

In response, a French Company-sponsored petition is circulated in the community, drawing hundreds of signatures.

The petition outlines four



The North Park is narrowed. Looking north up Tudor City Place, 1949

reasons against the plan: 1) Tudor City Place is not an official approach to the U.N., and thus needed no widening. 2) The completed U.N. buildings would have no view of Tudor City Place, blocked by the height of the street's skyscrapers. 3) The parks are used extensively, and reducing the size of their footprint would lead to overcrowding. 4) A wider street would encourage cars and trucks to speed, endangering the lives of residents.

In the end, the city prevails, and the proposed street widening becomes reality. There is an incidental benefit to the project, however: the addition of a sidewalk on the park side of Tudor City Place that never existed before.

The Historic Lamp Post

90 YEARS AGO in 1927, when the North Park



opens, it's equipped with decorative iron lamp posts for nighttime illumination. Today, one of these original lamps survives in the northwest corner of the park, adjacent to the brownstone at 340 E. 43rd Street. How this particular lamp post came to be saved is unknown, but today it's marked by a plaque honoring Bette McKean, a resident who underwrites its restoration in 2006. She is the wife of John McKean, the parks' great advocate, who is the subject of another story in this newsletter.

“Ask the Gardener”

When were the first trees planted in the parks?

When The Greens was established in 1987, The Landmarks Preservation Commission produced a historical report on Tudor City. According to the report, in the summer of 1927, a tree-moving machine was used to transplant full-grown trees to the site in the North Park. The grass, shrubbery, Norway maples, and spruce were tended by a uniformed and well-trained crew. In contrast, the South "Park" was transformed into a small, eighteen-hole golf course equipped with traps, a water hazard, nighttime illumination, and a professional golfer as an instructor.

Were many of the large trees all planted in 1927?

In 1964, about eighty percent of the original London plane trees along the sidewalks had been replaced by male gingko trees.

What happened to the Norway Maple trees?

In 2002, our past president, Bill Baltz procured a grant to remove the Maple trees because they posed a tremendous danger to the public due to the Maple's weak branching structure. Many of them had become habitats for the long-Horned Beetle, which further weakened the trees. In 2003, the Greens received another grant to plant low growing understory trees like Evergreen Magnolias, Golden Rain trees, Korean Dogwood, Japanese Stewardia, and Redbuds to allow for more light.



Gresham Lang

*Owner, Gresham Lang Design
and landscaper for Tudor City Greens*

Tudor City Greens Volunteers

Tudor City Greens, Inc. is a vibrant community of volunteer individuals and families who organize events, come out to plant in fall and spring, raise funds, and serve on the Board, listed on page 4 of this Newsletter. This regular column will feature volunteers, some of whom you see in the Greens and others are behind the scenes.



*Marcia Thompson, a Lifetime of
Contributing to the Greens*

Marcia Thompson has lived in Tudor City for 62 years, since 1955, a few years after the building of the United Nations. Born in China, her family moved to the U.S. when she was a child, settling in New Jersey. She worked in Manhattan for the New York Times Sunday section before joining the Ford Foundation as a program officer for the arts. Her husband, Ralph Thompson, was one of two editors who reviewed books for the Times. She has been involved in Tudor City Greens, Inc. since its founding 30 years ago, joining the Board in 2000, serving as Treasurer for many years. Marcia was instrumental in introducing financial discipline to an emerging volunteer organization, which is managed today by a board of dedicated volunteers representing each of the buildings that comprise Tudor City.

Marcia says that she is happy to be involved in something community oriented that benefits the community. She particularly loves that children learn about gardening in the middle of Manhattan by planting with trowels and gardening gloves that are just their size. Her favorite flowers are tulips, white tulips, as they “make a wonderful display” are a “lovely contrast with the green and the soil.” Tudor City Greens welcomes tulips every spring, planted by volunteers.



*Bill Moran, the Constant
Gardener*

If you're walking by the Greens any Wednesday morning between 8:00-10:00am, you'll see at least two gentlemen, Bill Moran and Roland Peracca, who have met as friends and have been volunteer gardeners most every week for the last several years to spruce up the Greens. They are two of a brigade of volunteers who quietly work in the background all year round to learn about plants and trees as they beautify the gardens, join others in the Fall and Spring to plant bulbs, and follow the master plan designed by Gresham Lang, the professional gardener whose article appears each issue of the Newsletter.

Bill moved to Tudor City in 1961 when he worked in the law department of Union Carbide Corporation in midtown. He remembers trimming the weeds along the split rail fences before they were replaced with metal ones. He was instrumental in suggesting the installation of metal railings in the North Park to enable elderly residents to navigate down the few steps leading to the area near the bird bath.

Bill's favorite pieces of equipment are the battery operated hedge trimmer and the weed whacker which makes the job much easier. So take a moment to admire the artistry in the meandering hedges and the work of all the volunteers.

What Your Donations Are Doing for the Greens



How to Become a Friend of the Greens

Make your tax-deductible gift payable to: Tudor City Greens, Inc.

Mail to: **Tudor City Greens, Inc**
5 Tudor City Place, #1-E
New York, NY 10017

Or leave at the Essex lobby desk, (325 East 41st Street), Attn: Lee Klinger, Treasurer
You may also donate online using a credit card via TudorCityGreens.org

Name _____ Address _____

Donation Amount _____

Email Address _____

Thanks for supporting the Greens and our community parks!



Friends of Tudor City Greens 2016

Public Support Donations Received Between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016



Golden Rain Tree Level (\$1,000 and more)

2 Tudor City Place Tenants Corp., 5 Tudor City Place Windsor Owners Corp., 25 Tudor City Place, 304-324 East 41st Street Owners Corp., 320 East 42nd Street Woodstock Owners Corp., 325 East 41st Street Essex Owners Corp., 330 East 43rd Street (Hermitage), 333 East 43rd Owners Corp (the Manor), 45 Tudor City Place Prospect Owners Corp., Sandra Dunn, Ford Foundation, Sherry Lambert Halpern, Lita Scheel Trust, William R. Moran, Marcia T. Thompson, Tudor City Association, Inc.



Oak Tree Level (\$500-\$999)

321 East 43rd Street (Cloister Owners Corp.), 333 East 41st Street Corp., Robert J. & Linda Allen, Sr., Michael L. Barlow, Jr., Stephanie DeYoung, David G. Freitas & Mark Naccarato, Sheldon & Shelley Goldseker, Simon B. & Sharna Goldseker Greer, Charles Mathes & Arlene Graston, Ryan J. Templin, Dr. David J. Wolf & Geri Bondanza, The New World Foundation



Star Magnolia Tree Level (\$300-\$499)

Anonymous, Dennis Di Millo, Deniz A. Erenguc & Ismail A. Nalcacioglu, Jerome M. Feldman, Anne F. & John Lynagh, David M. & Tanya Reiff, Robert M. Saling & Pat & Parker, Robert Sbarra Jr., Roger M. Schaffland, Bonnie H. Selve, Anne Stoddard



American Linden Tree Level (\$100-\$299)

Gwendolyn M. Aman, John S. Anastasi, Anonymous, Anthos U.S.A., Inc., William & Rebecca Austin, Beverly A. Bates, Sonia Berman, Charles E. & Estelle A. Berthiaume, Eric Patrick & Kevin Gardiner Beveridge, Blanche C. Gregory, Inc., Jere T. Brassell, James G. Brownell, Gloria and Stuart Byron, Ramona Calsada, Andrew Cesaretti, Charles & Lucille King Family Foundation, Christopher Cherry, Jill Christian, Brooke Clivers, Dana-Joy & David L. Cremin, Anthony Dellolio & Lisa S. Litera, Clarence & Constance Denne, Linda L. & Gary M. Divito, Laura A. & Bruce A. Dobson, Frederick W. & Carol Dohrmann, Henry J. & Mary Lynne Duffy, Norman Field, Matthew E. & Susan Galligan, Curtis S. Gathje, Sandra Greenberg, Taube Haight, Linda M. Harms. Rita Beecher Hill, Robert M. & Dana E. Iommazzo, Lauretta L. & Randall Maclaren Jakobsen, William J. & Lois G. Jakobsen, William S. Jovanovich & Sarah L. Martin, Kathleen Kalmes, David & Joan Katsky, Michael B. & Jacqueline Katz, Mary-Margaret Kerns, Fidel Keymolen, Louise Marie Kittel, Richard A. Komar, Stefanie Kowitz, Kim Kruegel, Liza Leigh-Kiwus, Anne Leigh, Mildred B. Leigh, Christin Davis Levine, Jane & Barry R. Linsky, Kittie Lonsdale, Jane Lute, Suzanne Martin, John P. Matthews, Dalia Maziar, William W. &

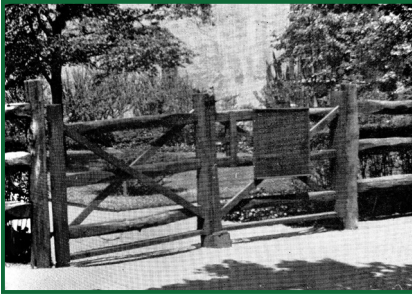
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Redbud Tree Level (up to \$99)

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The split-rail fence

North Park 90th Anniversary Continued from Page 1

The park's width is narrowed by 22 feet in 1949, when Prospect Place is widened (and re-named Tudor City Place), part of the neighborhood upgrades concurrent with the arrival of the United Nations. The original iron fencing is removed and a rustic, split-rail fence installed in its place. Much disparaged by locals, it remains in place until 1994.

In 1970, real estate tycoon Harry Helmsley acquires most of Tudor City, along with its parks, and announces his intention to build apartment towers upon them. After an epic, 15-year battle, Helmsley yields. In 1988, the parks are landmarked as part of the Tudor City Historic District. At that time, they are valued at \$40 million.

Ways to Volunteer at Tudor City Greens

Visit Website : TudorCityGreens.org or on Facebook

Newsletter, Publicity, Fundraising

The Board publishes a newsletter "Tudor City Greens"; volunteers produce flyers and promotional materials to publicize events and fundraising activities.

Special Events

Join volunteers at special events held in the Parks throughout the year for holiday decorating, hiding Easter eggs, arranging bistro chairs, and filling Halloween bags.

Greens Volunteers

Volunteer to garden Wednesday mornings in the Parks, Spring through Fall, to keep the Parks looking their best by planting, pruning, weeding and watering. Contact TudorCityGreens@gmail.com

Donate

Become a Friend of the Tudor City Greens, Inc., with a donation to support the Parks.

Credit card at Website:TudorCityGreens.org

Personal Check mailed to Tudor City Greens, Inc., 5 Tudor City Place, #1-E, New York, NY 10017.

Include your name, address, email, and amount to receive a confirmation

Donations are tax-deductible; Tudor City Greens, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) corporation

Events Calendar 2017

Wednesday, May 17:

8am, Spring Volunteer Planting Day, Both Parks

Sunday, June 4:

11:30am - 1:30pm, Music, South Park

Thursday, June 15:

6:00pm, Summer of Mystery Book Talk: *The Cask*

Wednesday, June 21:

6:30pm Tudor City Greens' 30th Anniversary, South Park

Wednesday, July 19:

6:00pm Summer of Mystery Book Talk: *Murder Must Advertise*

Monday, August 7:

6:00pm, Summer of Mystery Book Talk: *Sweet Danger The Fear Sign*

Wednesday, August 16:

6:30pm, Concert, South Park

Tuesday, August 22:

6:00pm, Summer of Mystery Book Talk: *The Dain Curse*

Sunday, September 10:

11:30am-1:30pm, Brunch, South Park

Saturday, October 28:

11:00am, Dog Parade, North Park

Tuesday, October 31:

6:30pm, Halloween Parade, South Park

Saturday, November 4:

10:30am Fall Planting Day, Both Parks

Saturday, December 2:

11:00am Holiday Decorating, Both Parks

Thursday, December 7:

6:30pm, Christmas Tree Lighting- South Park

Tuesday, December 12:

6:30pm, Chanukkah Menorah Lighting- North Park

Tudor City Greens Newsletter Writers/Contributors

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Gresham Lang, Landscape Designer