

FRIENDS OF FORT TOTTEN PARKS

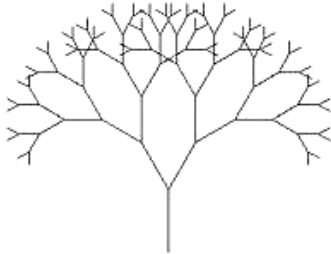
NEWSLETTER



P.O. Box 604984, Bayside, NY 11360 (718) 670—3684

Volume 9 / Issue 1

Winter/Spring 2014



The Friends of Fort Totten

Fall Meeting

Date to be announced

**The meeting will be held
in the Parks Department
Building.**

**parking will be allowed on the fort grounds
adjacent to the Parks Bldg.**

(see website for map or ask at front gate)

Agenda

**What's new at the Fort? Committee reports
New & old business**

Officers of the Friends of Fort Totten

Co—President	Joe Branzetti
Co—President	Gary Forster
First VP	Al Evans
Second VP	Lily Louis
Treasurer	Lu Kernahan
Corresponding Secretary	Sylvia Johnson

**Comfort station
& Parking lot**



under construction.

Construction is progressing on both the comfort station and parking lot now that winter has lost its grip on the weather.

Although one of our signature events, **Family Fun Day** will be held in Crocheron Park this year. We hope to have all construction completed and ready for our Halloween Festival. Stay tuned !



**Welcome our new
Parks Commissioner
Mitchell J. Silver**

Mayor Bill de Blasio introduced Mitchell J. Silver as the new Department of Parks Commissioner in Seward Park located on the Lower East Side of Manhattan on March 21st 2014. Commissioner Silver, a Brooklyn native and national urban planner in Raleigh, North Carolina was cited by the Mayor as a “visionary” who shared a commitment to making sure that parks “work for all of our people.” Mr. Silver noted that a park system is “vital to a healthy & prosperous city”. He pledged to work with “all New Yorkers in all boroughs in all neighborhoods.”

Welcome aboard Commissioner Silver !

FAMILY FUN DAY—2014

**Saturday—June 14 - Flag Day !
12 noon - 3 pm**

**Location: Crocheron Park
(33 Rd. and 215 Pl.)**

Please join us for a fun afternoon of free activities including games, crafts, medical screening, pet microchipping, demonstrations and more !

Corrections & increments

We misspelled Paul Coburn in our last issue.

Fort Totten Is Not Just Another Park — It's "Our" Park !

2013—So you think THIS winter was a cold one?

Frozen Ducks in the Kitchen By George DeWan | Staff Writer Newsday—date unknown

Nations at war shiver through the Northeast's hard winter of 1779-80

IT WAS so cold the ducks froze.

The snow began to fall about the 10th of November, 1779, and continued falling almost every day until the middle of the following March. The Northeast virtually shut down. It was known as The Hard Winter, and may have been the coldest these parts have seen since the Wisconsin glacier.

It was a world of ice. The rivers, creeks and streams on Long Island were frozen solid, as was Upper New York Bay. The East River and the Hudson River could be crossed by foot. British cavalry thundered from Manhattan to Staten Island. Long Island Sound was more ice than water.



As for the frozen ducks, the Long Island Loyalist judge, Thomas Jones, a sober man not usually given to tongue-in-cheek tall tales, passed along a "remarkable if true" story about a Staten Island farmer named Goosen Adriance:

"He went out in the morning upon his farm, which adjoins the water, and going along the shore, he observed a parcel of ducks sitting erect and in their proper posture," Jones wrote in his book, "History of New York During the Revolutionary War." The author continued: "He walked up to them, found them stiff, and as he supposed perfectly dead; he carried them home, threw them down upon the table in his kitchen, where a large wood fire was burning, and went into the next room to breakfast with his family. Scarce was the breakfast over when a great noise and fluttering was heard in the kitchen. Upon opening the door, how great the surprise. The supposed dead ducks were all flying about the room."

The Friends of Fort Totten Parks Newsletter Committee

Contributing Writers & Editors	Lily Louis Pat Riot
Advertising	Sylvia Johnson
Distribution	Joe Branzetti



Halloween Event
"Wrap up"

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time!

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Nature Corner



Consider the lowly slug—the butt of jokes to some, part of a healthy diet to others.

This slow and docile creature serves an important part in the eco system we live in. They eat decaying plant material and fungi and help remind us to watch our step in the backyard.

A “slug” is your basic common name for a shell-less terrestrial gastropod mollusk. That’s simply an earth bound shell-less snail. As a matter of fact, a gastropod that HAS a shell is (you guessed it)—a snail. There are both land and water snails are, slugs in case you wondered.

One of the things we notice about slugs is that they leave a trail. Why? It’s because mucus they excrete helps the slug navigate his way along the day. It prevents the slug from slipping off vertical surfaces as well as leaving behind a calling card to other slugs who might be looking for a mate. The slime trail also provides protection by distracting would be predators who will find the scent distasteful and difficult for a bird to pick up as it’s very slippery.

Slugs are preyed upon by every major vertebrate group. They seem to be on everyone’s menu. When attacked, the slug rolls up into a tight ball and attached themselves to whatever they’re sitting on. This combination coupled with their slimy, slippery outer coating makes it difficult for a predator to grasp. Coupled with the less than tasty flavor, the slug often stands a fighting chance. Some slugs hibernate in winter while others expire in late fall. - Pat Riot

The 2014 Halloween event held during the day was met with crisp winds and the sounds of family and friends alike enjoying a day out in the park. Inflatable rides, pumpkin patches and a costume contest topped the day of free merriment. A good time was had by all . Many thanks to all our volunteers and supporting vendors. Without them , these free events could not happen.

The Fort on Haunted Hill was a scream!

The Fort on Haunted Hill was a scream!
Guests and goblins were met at the front gate of the Fort by brave Park Rangers who escorted them through the dark and often spooky corridors and caverns of the Fort.

The brave guests were met with scary varieties of spooky witches, ghouls and your garden variety icky monsters. All in fun as when they emerged from the haunted hall, all was well again.. (till next year)



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Frozen Ducks—(cont from page 2)

According to weather historian David M. Ludlum, no winter before or since was as cold.

"Long Island Sound was almost completely clogged with ice, and people were able to cross from Long Island to the vicinity of Stamford on the Connecticut shore for several days," Ludlum writes in "Early American Winters: 1604-1820." "Some Hessian soldiers took advantage of this route in order to escape from their regiments."

Judge Jones, who lived at Fort Neck (now Massapequa), wrote in his book that 200 provision-laden sleighs, pulled by two horses each, escorted by 200 light cavalry, made the five-mile trip from New York to Staten Island. On Long Island, with British occupiers making demands for firewood, cattle and living space, already harsh conditions were made even harsher. Part of Long Island Sound became a highway of ice. "It was so strong, that deserters went upon the ice to Connecticut from Lloyd's Neck, upon Long Island, the distance more than 12 miles."

George Washington's troops were shivering in winter quarters at Morristown, N.J. One writer said it made Valley Forge of the previous year look like a picnic. But his men occasionally snuck across the frozen harbor and attacked British troops on Staten Island. The British hauled cannons across the ice from Manhattan to defend themselves.

WASHINGTON, an inveterate diary-keeper, has this entry for Jan. 6, 1780: "The snow which in general is 18 inches deep is much drifted -- roads impassable." He was apparently referring to the new snowfall from a major storm on that date, since other records indicate there was already close to four feet of snow on the ground.

"In the woods it lay at least four feet upon a level," Jones wrote. "It was with the utmost difficulty that the farmers got their wood . . . All the wood upon New York Island was cut down. The forest trees planted in gardens, in court yards, in avenues, along lanes, and about the houses of gentlemen by way of ornament, shared the same fate. Quantities of apple trees, peach trees, plum trees, cherry trees, and pear trees, were also cut down."

The New York Packet reported a thermometer reading of 16 below zero in the city. Current records of Central Park readings only go back to 1869, so this would beat the 15 below zero recorded in 1934. The severe cold reached up and down the coast, from Maine to Georgia. Ludlum says that the Connecticut Courant in Hartford provided the most complete temperature record. And, due to the lack of sophistication of the newspaper's audience, the editor believed it was necessary to explain the nature of a thermometer and what its readings meant.



Ed. note—Happy Spring!

Fort Totten Fact

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

Attentive television viewers will notice that episodes of "The Following" & "The Black List" have all recently included scenes from inside Fort Totten.

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OUR FLAG



Flag Day

In the United States, Flag Day is celebrated on June 14.

June 14th is the day the second Continental Congress adopted the flag of a fledgling United States back in 1777. The flag back then, known also as the “Betsy Ross” flag, consisted of 13 stripes alternating red & white but only with 13 stars in a circle on a blue field to represent each of the States that were part of the Union.

It took until 1916 for then American President Woodrow Wilson to issue a proclamation that June 14th would be known as Flag Day, and President Harry Truman & Congress proclaimed it a Federal Holiday in 1949.

A little know fact is that Bernard Cigrand, also known as the Father of Flag Day, held an unofficial observance of Flag Day in 1885. He was a school teacher at Stony Hill in Waubeka, Wisconsin and a man before his time.

This June 14th, make sure you proudly fly your American Flag at home, on your bicycle, your car, or a pin on your jacket. - Pat Riot

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and
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Potters Field—revisited

Potter's Field - is a generic term used to denote a burial place for those unclaimed, less fortunate, homeless, and unidentified. There have been various Potter's Fields in New York City over the years including Washington Square Park, Madison and Bryant Parks. There were as many as one hundred “Potter's Fields” in New York City in the late 1800 but as the city grew, it was decided to consolidate and establish a new Potter's Field on Hart Island just off City Island in The Bronx. The former Potter's Fields still serve as burial places from years past and remains are often excavated during construction. Hart Island has been the sole Potter's Field since it was purchased by the city. Currently, there are over a million graves on Hart Island. Access to the island has been extremely limited to the public.

Hart Island's Potter's Field has been under the jurisdiction of the NYC Dept. of Corrections for decades now, but a recent bill introduced by the New York City Council would transfer that responsibility to the Department of Parks and Recreation. An additional bill would establish regular public ferry service to the island. These two bills would ultimately allow anyone to visit the island. Many who lost loved ones and were unsure of their final resting place would have a place to pay their respects.

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OPEN 7 DAYS

Friends of Fort Totten Parks and The New York City Dept. of Parks

Date: Sunday, May 4, 2014
Event: Pets & Pals/Walk 4 Paws Party
Time: 12 noon – 3:00 pm
Location: Alley Pond Park (76th Ave off Springfield Blvd)
Description: Join us for a free day of family and pet fun. Games, rides, craft projects, pet adoption, pet walks and microchip clinic, animal demonstrations and more. Free giveaways.
Sponsored by Council Member Mark Weprin

Date: Saturday, June 14, 2014
Event: Friends of Fort Totten Parks' Family Fun Day
Time: 12 noon – 3 pm
Location: Crocheron Park (33 Rd. and 215 Pl).
Description: Please join us for a fun afternoon of free activities including games, crafts, medical screening, pet micro chipping, demonstrations and more. Sponsored by Cord Meyer Develop.Corp./ Council Member Paul Vallone

Date: Sunday, June 22, 2014 *(raindate: June 29)
Event: Bayside Historical Society Lawn Concert
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: Crocheron Park (35 Avenue and Cross Island Pkwy.- across from Golden Pond).
Description: Enjoy an outdoor concert. Please bring a low


Date: Thursday, July 10, 2014
Event: A morning of music with Darlene Graham
Time: 10:30 am
Location: Crocheron Park (Buz O'Rourke Playground)
Description: Darlene Graham entertains children of all ages with her interactive and exciting performance. A mix of energetic folk and remixes of familiar children's songs will have everyone singing along and dancing. Please bring a blanket or low chair.
Sponsored by Cord Meyer Development Corp.

Date: Saturday, September 27, 2014
Event: National Estuaries Day - Little Neck Bay Festival
Time: 11 am – 3 pm
Location: Alley Pond Environmental Center
Description: Help us celebrate our estuaries by enjoying a beautiful afternoon with APEC and other community groups, games, crafts, canoe rides, and more.

Date: Saturday, October 25, 2014 *(raindate: October 26)
Event: Halloween Festival
Time: 12 noon – 3:00 pm
Location: Fort Totten Park
Description: Join us for a free day of spooky family fun. Games, rides, craft projects, costume contest, pumpkin patch and goodie bags. Sponsored by Council Member Paul Vallone

Date: October 24 & 25
Event: Haunted Lantern Tours
Time: 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Location: Fort Totten Park
Description: Join the Urban Park Rangers as they mix history with Halloween on a lantern tour of the historic Water Battery at Fort Totten. You must be

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