



# THE FRIENDS OF THE nyacks

SPRING 2007 NEWS & EVENTS

## Letter from the Chair

When the founders of *The Friends of the Nyacks* established our group, they picked the perfect name for our organization! What better compliment can you give someone than to call them a true friend? That is what our members endeavor to do each and every year—to serve as true and trusted friends to the community we serve. As you read this newsletter, we ask those of you who are not members to think about becoming members and/or supporters of *The Friends of the Nyacks*.

We continue to participate in discussions and help develop plans to address civic issues of vital importance to the quality of life in our community. See the reports of the *Community Concerns Committee*, the *Merchants' Committee* and the *Streetscape Project* in this newsletter for detailed information. Our Merchants' Committee is sponsoring its second *Arts Walk*. Look inside for more information.

*Riverspace* continues to provide exciting programs to entertain each and every member of your family. Sign up for up to the

minute calendar and event information at [Riverspace.org](http://Riverspace.org).

*New to Nyack* welcomes individuals and families to our community. Read about it here.

We ask you to help make our work possible by participating in our upcoming fundraisers. Dates and locations appear within.

You may not know that Friends is run and staffed solely by volunteers. All of our work—from leasing the theater, to raising funds for the playpark equipment in Memorial Park, the operation of our walking tours and armchair tours, our planning and operation of *Riverfest*, *Mostly Music*, *Crabfest* and *Youthfest*—is made possible through the dedicated efforts of a small group of volunteers. We need your help. We need more volunteers to expand our efforts. Let your voice be heard as a Friends' volunteer!

We would like to publicly thank our volunteers for their continuing work. Without your friendship, we cannot continue to serve. —*All the best, Deborah Darbonne*

## RIVERSPACE: Spread the Word

What a long road we've traveled in the short time since Winter, 2006, when the Helen Hayes Theater Company announced it was closing its doors!

During the public meeting following the Helen Hayes Theatre Company's announcement, *The Friends of The Nyacks* volunteered to spearhead the effort to save the theater. Contact was made with Milbrook Properties, the owner of the theater complex, that very night to commence negotiations. When Rosie O'Donnell's generous offer to purchase the theater complex was rejected by Milbrook, and the effort to overturn the theater's sale foundered, things looked bleak, but, undaunted, Friends forged ahead. Friends' efforts were led by its chair, Deborah

Darbonne, supported by Bob Gundersen, its Treasurer, and the Steering Committee of Friends.

We immediately launched a search for a theater operator and angels to back the theater, announcing our intentions on our website and in the press. In fact, we met with Milbrook and our elected officials to secure an option to lease the theater (dated after the day the Helen Hayes' Theatre Company's option was scheduled to expire) the very week the Helen Hayes Theatre Company's public meeting was held.

One theater operator stepped up, but then backed away and told Friends to proceed on its own as she explored other opportunities for a local theater. Friends was undeterred.

*Continued on next page*

## CALENDAR

*See newsletter articles for details on these events*

**SUN, APRIL 29, 12-3PM**  
FON FAMILY FUN DAY AT THE NYACK CENTER

**SUN, APRIL 29, 2PM**  
OAK HILL CEMETERY WALKING TOUR

**SAT, MAY 5, 12-3PM**  
RIVERFEST IN MEMORIAL PARK

**WED, MAY 16, 7:30PM**  
FON SPRING FUNDRAISER AT THE HUDSON HOUSE

**SUN, MAY 20, 2PM**  
UPPER NYACK WALKING TOUR

**SUN, JUNE 10, 2PM**  
SOUTH NYACK WALKING TOUR

**JUNE 14 - JUNE 17TH**  
ART WALK

**TUES, JUNE 26, 6PM**  
YOUTHFEST IN MEMORIAL PARK

**TUESDAYS, JULY 3 THROUGH JULY 31, 7:30PM**  
MOSTLY MUSIC CONCERTS IN MEMORIAL PARK

**TUES, AUGUST 7, 6PM**  
MOSTLY MUSIC CONCERT & CRABFEST IN MEMORIAL PARK

**SUN, SEPT 23, 2PM**  
WALKING TOUR OF DOWNTOWN NYACK & BUSINESS DISTRICT

# 2007 Fundraising Events

## FAMILY FUN DAY

Please join us on April 29, 12-3pm at The Nyack Center for a Family Fun Day. Think carnival. Balloon animals. Face painting. Clowns. Music. AND Dr. Watson has volunteered to stand in the pie throwing booth, he just doesn't know that he has volunteered yet... This day promises to be a fun outing for us all. Admission: Kids 5-12: \$5 /Adults: \$10.

## ANNUAL SPRING FUNDRAISER

On May 16th we will be hosting our **annual Spring fundraiser at the Hudson House** of Nyack. We are planning a sit down dinner this year, some musical entertainment, and a bevy of fabulous offerings in our silent auction. Generous donations for the auction have already started coming in and we welcome additional items. This event is sure to sell out fast so mark your calendars now! Information on ticket sales will become available as we get closer to the date.

We hope that all of our members are able to join us in the fun we have planned for this upcoming Spring.

For inquiries and auction item donations, please contact Danielle Watson, Fundraising Committee Chair at 353-4701.



## The latest on the Streetscape Project

The Nyack Village Board chose Hakim Associates, a landscape architecture firm, to design the installation of new sidewalks, new trees with grates, placement of new conduits for new lighting signage, street furniture, street crossings, etc. in the Nyack business district from Broadway to Franklin streets. The firm will be holding meetings with the VB, Village Engineer, Streetscape Design Committee and the public in the coming months.

The grant committee, chaired by Bob Gundersen, submitted an application for a community block grant to help fund much needed repairs in the greater Nyack business area. It is expected that a decision will be made in April.

## RIVERSPACE

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Volunteers from the professional artistic community residing in the Nyacks stepped forward, organized by Elliott Forrest, and offered to work with Friends in this effort. Friends garnered the support of the non-profit artistic community in the Nyacks to join in the quest to save the theater. Friends' Steering Committee members located an angel who was willing to sign a guarantee agreement with Milbrook, giving Friends' the financial ability to enter into the lease agreement. Later, other donors stepped forward to undertake this liability.

Milbrook worked in tandem with Friends, not only by accepting the guarantor Friends offered, but also by negotiating the lease price and agreeing to grant Friends' request for an option to purchase the theater complex. Friends was in the theater business. Friends' members voted to enter into the lease and Riverspace was born! This was a bold move for a small non-profit organization operated solely by volunteers.

Friends was willing and able to undertake the theater lease because of the generosity of its donors and the enthusiastic support of the artistic community who were willing to do the backbreaking work to make the dream of Riverspace a reality. Together they renovated the space, produced and organized a performance schedule and now operate the theater for the benefit of the community.

The volunteer response from the artistic community has been overwhelming, galva-

nized by Elliott Forrest, Darrell Larson, Joe Morley, John Forster, Bill Irwin, Kristi Zea, Peter Danish, Brian Maffit, Deborah Grosmark, Neil Berg, Tom Chapin, Michael Mark, Grey Johnson, David Gonzales, Heather Winters, Lynn Haviland and Alice Kriz, and led by producers Debbie Reich and Josh Goldberg. Professional artists and concerned Rockland County residents volunteer to head committees to provide jazz, rock, theater and educational programming. Countless others work to keep the operation



going. Professional artists perform for less than the going rate; some accept no money at all! Generous benefactors supply pianos, equipment, expertise and labor that Riverspace could not otherwise afford.

The non-profit community also donates its efforts. Rockland Center for the Arts recently donated equipment to Riverspace. Elmwood Playhouse lent Riverspace ticketing facilities at the outset of our operations and lent costumes for Neil Berg's wonderful Rocky Horror Picture Show Concert.

Community participation and support from all of Rockland County is critical to the survival of Riverspace. Riverspace provides a location where the wonderful diversity of Rockland County can be celebrated.

Wonderful performances with sold-out

audiences, the fabulous new Café with live performances, and the smiling faces of those in attendance are a testament to the talents of all involved. Volunteers from the old Helen Hayes Theatre Company have also returned to pitch in and help once again. The donors have exceeded the contribution levels promised to Friends and continue to give of their time and their funds with incredible generosity.

Now, we are pleased to announce that we have finalized the governance plan for Riverspace. We submitted documentation to New York State to establish a new corporation affiliated with *The Friends of The Nyacks* to operate Riverspace. The new corporation will have its own board of directors. Three of the directors will be appointed by Friends' Steering Committee—Bob Gundersen, Foster Bass and Debra Stolarik—to monitor the operation. This new corporation will be able to attract the talent and money necessary to enable Riverspace to continue to function and thrive. As part of this plan, Friends will be insulated from liability under the lease.

Word of mouth is the best advertisement for Riverspace. Sign up for e-mails at [Riverspace.org](http://Riverspace.org) to get the latest news and calendar of upcoming events, check ticket prices, order tickets and to donate or volunteer. Please tell your friends and neighbors to come and enjoy the programming. Friends thanks the donors and the countless volunteers who have made Riverspace a reality!

[riverspace.org](http://riverspace.org)

# An update from **THE COMMUNITY CONCERNS COMMITTEE**

*The Community Concerns Committee* (CCC) both tracks and involves itself in a range of village issues that relate to the general well being of the community. For a small village, Nyack has a very complex governmental structure from which most residents are removed. It is our intent to select certain areas and monitor these so that we can report back to you on important initiatives underway.

## **THE FOLLOWING ARE THINGS THAT WE'VE BEEN TRACKING:**

The Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) for Nyack was adopted on January 11, 2007 and can be read online or downloaded by going to [nyack.org](http://nyack.org) and then selecting Village of Nyack Home Page.

The Village Board voted to allocate funds to hire a firm to revamp its entire zoning code. This process will take at least a year and will update old codes and develop new codes that may be required under the CMP.

The Nyack Parking Authority has recommended a number of resolutions to the Village Board based on the recently completed BfJ parking study. To see these, contact Debra Karten at the Mayor's office by either calling 358-0229 or emailing her by going to the village website and clicking on Offices.

The Nyack Parking Authority has authorized the reconfiguring of the lot behind the Riverspace Theater to allow for approximately 60 more parking spaces.

A new member to the 5 member Parking Authority has just been appointed. She is Cynthia Turner. Ron McCormack has also been named as an alternate to that board.

The Village Board has selected a landscape architect to draw up an overall scheme for our downtown streetscape. Thanks to the work of the CMP and the Downtown Nyack Coalition's Streetscape Committee this firm will start off with a pretty good understanding of the kinds of things the village is interested in. The design will address sidewalks, street furniture, trash barrels, trees and tree grates, and possibly signage recommendations.

The village has submitted an application to the County for Community

Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and should have some indication by April if their request will be approved. The grant will cover some of the costs to erect new light fixtures in the downtown. This will be an ongoing project.

The CCC committee and the Friends, along with many other non-profit organizations in Nyack, are beginning to organize and develop plans for Nyack's participation in the 2009 Hudson River Quadricentennial Celebration. This celebration commemorates the 400th anniversary of the historic voyages made by Henry Hudson and Samuel de Champlain and will also mark the anniversary of Robert Fulton's 1807 steamship journey up the Hudson River. The event will involve all the riverfront communities along the Hudson and will extend through the summer of 2009 into the fall. To get involved, you can contact the [www.friendsofthenyacks.org](http://www.friendsofthenyacks.org) or [nangundersen@msn.com](mailto:nangundersen@msn.com). Everyone is welcomed to participate. For more information about this gala happening, you can go to the state website [www.exploreny400.com](http://www.exploreny400.com).

With the help of the CCC committee of the Friends, the Nyack restaurants met to discuss how they could work with the village to resolve the issues around employee parking. In addition, they will be looking at how to develop cross promotional activities with our downtown theaters—Riverspace and Elmwood.

We would like to extend an invitation to anyone who may have a particular question or concern to contact me, Nan Gundersen, at [nangundersen@msn.com](mailto:nangundersen@msn.com). I will either try to answer your question or refer you to the appropriate person, department or organization. The CCC has recently been considering running occasional community forums on issues of broad concern. In order to do this, we will need help. Anyone interested can contact me at the above email address or call me at 358-1739. We are also looking for individuals to help us monitor various village meetings.

## **FRIENDS OF THE NYACK STEERING COMMITTEE 2007**

Chair: Deborah Darbonne

Vice-Chairs: Charlie Cross, Jennifer Smith

Treasurer: Bob Gundersen

Secretary (*Recording*): Robin Scheuer



### **COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

Community Concerns: Nancy Gundersen

Discover the Nyacks: Ginny Stoll Dorf

Fundraising: Danielle Watson

Membership: Karen Kennell

Merchants' Committee:

Anne Beneville and Paulette Ross

Mostly Music: Bert Hughes

Programming: Heather Haera,  
Jeff McDowell (Special Programs)

Publicity/PR: Tama Shor Beck

Streetscape Project: Carol Fleischmann



### **OTHER**

Parliamentarian: Foster Bass

Historian: Barbara Gillman

Members-at-large: Caroline Keith,

Anna Msowoya-Keys, Debbra Stolarik

Secretary (*Communications*): Kathy Tappenden

Newsletter Editors: Tama Shor Beck, Kathy Sestak

Newsletter Design/Layout: Loraine Machlin

Photographer: John Malino



*The Friends of the Nyacks Steering Committee Meetings take place the First Wednesday of every month at 7:30pm at South Nyack Village Hall.*

## **"NEW TO NYACK"**

Do you have a new friend or neighbor who has moved to the Nyack area?

If so tell them about New to Nyack, an organization that offers welcome, connections, and friendship to newcomers.

"New to Nyack" meets one Sunday a month for a late afternoon potluck party. Membership is informal with no dues.

Members are all ages. Families, couples and single people are all welcome.

For more information, please contact:  
Janet: 480-5419, Pat: 480-5690,  
Sherry: 480-5421



## SATURDAY, MAY 5: Riverfest

Join us in Memorial Park on May 5, 12-3 pm for a waterfront festival in celebration of the history and bounty of the Hudson River.

This fun event includes shad tasting, live music and entertainment, children's activities, environmental exhibits and free kayak demonstrations and rides. Everyone can sample and enjoy the deliciously prepared and freshly cooked shad courtesy of the Hudson River Foundation.

Be part of the fun! This event is FREE to all and is presented in conjunction with our affiliate, Rockland Friends of Clearwater.

## 2007 Walking Tours SUNDAYS AT 2PM

### APRIL 29 & OCT 14 TOUR OF OAK HILL CEMETERY

Walk scenic Oak Hill Cemetery and celebrate the lives of many "permanent residents of the Nyacks." Meets at Cemetery entrance gate on Route 9W, behind Nyack Hospital.

### MAY 20 AND OCT 7: TOUR OF UPPER NYACK

Begins at Hopper House and goes north on Broadway past glorious Victorians and sites of the ship-building era of the Nyacks.

### JUNE 10: TOUR OF SOUTH NYACK

Corner of South Broadway and Cedar Hill begins this tour highlighting famous homes, stained glass windows and other features of the Victorian Age.

### SEPTEMBER 23: TOUR OF DOWNTOWN NYACK & THE BUSINESS DISTRICT

The foot of Main Street starts this tour as one begins to see many of the buildings that began their story in the "Gilded Age" of American history. See why Nyack was the "Gem of the Hudson."

There is a \$5 fee for each tour. Visit our website at [www.friendsofthenyacks.org](http://www.friendsofthenyacks.org) or call 845-358-7910

## Do You Have Any Friends?

Out of our great communities of Nyack, South Nyack, and Upper Nyack, the Friends of the Nyacks only has 501 members.

The Friends of the Nyacks needs more Friends! What does a FON membership get you? You will be part of an organization whose purpose is to improve upon the quality of life of all persons visiting, residing or working in our villages. Some examples of community contributions by FON include; the annual Mostly Music Concert Series, the raising of funds for the new playground equipment, construction of the Memorial Park Gazebo and the formation of the Farmers Market. Plus, FON members get the added bonus of feeling great by being part of something bigger than themselves. So go ask a friend to be a Friend! With more Friends we can represent our diverse community even better. Visit [www.friendsofthenyacks.org](http://www.friendsofthenyacks.org) for a membership application and to sign-up for our free e-mail event notification.

## JUNE 14-17: Art Walk



With the enormous success of the October '06 Art Walk, The Nyack Merchants' Committee proudly announces an even bigger ART WALK to kick off the summer. We are starting to receive submissions from all

interested artists and retail stores. It would be our pleasure to include any and all volunteers in our efforts to bring the world to Nyack, Gateway to New York Arts and Culture.

For further details, contact Paulette Ross and Anne Beneville, Co-chairs, Nyack Merchants' Committee. Please go to our website and email us your info: [www.nyackmerchants.com](http://www.nyackmerchants.com).

## 2007 MOSTLY MUSIC

TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 6PM:

### YOUTHFEST

Barbeque including free hamburgers, hot dogs, and drinks for kids from 6:00- 7:00. Family-friendly entertainment will include something for children of all ages, starting with a clown and magician. Afterwards a popular local songwriter will perform. Last year there were over 700 people at this fabulous event. Come early and bring the whole family!

### TUESDAYS, JUNE 3 THROUGH 31: MOSTLY MUSIC CONCERTS IN MEMORIAL PARK

TUESDAY, AUGUST 7, 6PM:  
CRABFEST

This event is made possible in part with funds from the Community Arts Grants program of the Arts Council of Rockland and the Decentralization Program of the New York State Council on the Arts.

All concert events are FREE to the public.

CLIP AND SAVE



## ROCKLAND FRIENDS OF CLEARWATER

APRIL 11, 6:30PM: Potluck meeting at Grace Church  
APRIL 20 & MAY 18, 8PM: Contra Dances  
SEPT. 23, 10AM-1PM: Sail on the Sloop Clearwater

Find out more info at our website  
[rocclear.pair.com](http://rocclear.pair.com)

## A Call to Volunteers

We need "Friends" to help at FON events as well as with fundraising and promotion.

If you can spare a bit of time and would like to get involved, please contact Debbra Stolarik, FON volunteer coordinator, at [dstolarik@ag.com](mailto:dstolarik@ag.com).