



# GUIDELINES

www.GANYC.ORG

The Newsletter of the Guides Association of New York City

AUTUMN 2008

## RED HOOK & WATERFRONT MUSEUM FAM TOUR

by Pat Guida

On August 18th, a group of GANYC members boarded the IKEA ferry at Pier 11 on their way to a FAM tour of Red Hook, Brooklyn and the Waterfront Museum. During their passage through the Buttermilk Channel, they viewed Eliasson's waterfalls, Governors' Island and the Civil War era warehouses along the Brooklyn waterfront.

Pat Guida led the group on a tour of the neighborhood as they headed toward the Waterfront Museum. At the Erie Basin, constructed by William Beard in 1864, they saw the barges which are used for Macy's fireworks and heard about the graving dock which had been replaced by IKEA's parking lot. When Red Hook was a thriving shipping port, ships from all over the world were repaired at this dry dock.

Walking along Van Brunt Street toward the waterfront, the group viewed two warehouses built by Beard in 1869 and recently restored by Greg O'Connell,



The Red Hook Waterfront Museum

a former policeman. Many small businesses now occupy the 21 attached warehouses of the Beard-Robinson Stores while a Fairway Market is in a five story warehouse across the street.

The guides were greeted by David Sharps, President, as they crossed the gangplank to enter the Waterfront Museum \which is located in a ninety-four year old Lehigh Valley barge at the foot of Conover Street. David, whose family lives on the barge, held the group's attention for almost two hours (despite the appearance of Dewey the bunny) as he used slides to tell the story of the barge.

He escaped from the poverty of Appalachia by learning how to juggle and working on cruise ships. He demonstrated his skill before we left. He lived on a boat in Paris while studying mime and theater.

He eventually wound up in New York and became caretaker of a barge. In 1985, when that barge was scheduled for demolition, he found Barge #79 mired in the mud at Edgewater, New Jersey and bought it for \$1.

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If you have issues you wish the GANYC Board or any of the association's committees to address, here is a list of the appropriate parties to whom you should go. Each officer and committee chair has his/her contact information posted in the Members List section of the association's website,

[www.GANYC.ORG](http://www.GANYC.ORG)

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**SUBMIT MATERIAL TO:** [baker.tours@yahoo.com](mailto:baker.tours@yahoo.com).

The editor strongly encourages contributors to submit their work via email. Mailed submissions ATTENTION: NEWSLETTER EDITOR at the address above.

## DISAPPEARING NEW YORK LANGUAGE

... *Street Games (Part 2)*

by Lee Gelber

In *Street Games (Part 1)*, we discussed sporting activities that required no equipment. But, in Part 2, we cover the many games that required the use of the high bouncing pink rubber ball made by the venerable AG Spalding Company and called by New Yorkers a "Spaldeen".

**Box Ball** could be considered a variation on tennis or table tennis but no nets, racquets, or paddles required. Courtesy of typical city sidewalks, a grid forming large boxes – a square yard approximately was the "court" for box ball. Hitting the Spaldeen with the palm of your hand you tried to have long rallies and stay within the confines of the grid. As in the aforementioned racquet sports if you missed or hit the ball out of bounds you lost a point. A word used in that game and in King-Queen (a/k/a Chinese Handball) was "HINDOO". If the ball hit a stray pebble or a crack in the sidewalk the hitter could claim Hindoo for that obstruction and have the opportunity to do the play over. Of course the opponent could try to deny the existence of the Hindoo-causing foreign object or obstruction.

**Chinese Handball** or **King-Queen** required a wall and the grid boxes of the typical pavement in an apartment building neighborhood. The ubiquitous pink ball again was struck with the palm of the hand and it was hit with a downward stroke so it bounced first before hitting the wall and it was also directed to the box occupied by the "king," "queen" or "jack". Using a negative scoring system if you missed too many shots you were out of the game and one moved up in position - from jack to queen etc. Again, Hindoo could be claimed if a wall had a crack or bump that made the ball go awry.

**Stick Ball** – the ultimate street game based on the rules of America's pastime baseball. However, no protective cups, batting helmets, shin guards or chest protectors required. The basic equipment was the vital Spaldeen and a broom stick. One of the peculiar bits of jargon from stick ball was to be described as a 2 or 3 "sewer" man. New York

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

Forget the part about “since September 11,” NYC tourism has surpassed all records – EVER!

By contrast, I know that all of you have heard about what’s going on in this country. It doesn’t take much to be able to figure out that the New York tourism “gravy train” is liable to get pretty slow before too long. I mean, from listening to the news, it seems that by next summer, about half of the population of America will be living out of their cars—AND won’t be able to buy the gas to GO anywhere! If it weren’t so sad it would be funny. It seems to me that something has to give.

What to do about it? Perhaps I can offer some suggestions.

For one thing, if you think in terms of the seasons, maybe you can get a sense of who’s traveling when and find a way to target them in your marketing.

For example, with the fall upon us, you may want to consider who the fall visitors are as opposed to those who come in other seasons? When you think of the school year, it’s a synch that it’s not people with kids, like in the summer. But retirees would be a good bet. This is also a segment of the population that is less likely to be affected by the now-famous “Mortgage Mess” as they are more likely to have already paid off their homes.

But no one is immune to the new inflation we’re going through. Except for maybe those people who are just “above it all.” I’m referring to the very wealthy. A lot of them do come here. You may want to find a way to market to them.

And I’m sure it’s no surprise to you that since the dollar is so weak against other currencies that people from out of the country are coming big time. And now-a-days with the Internet it’s a lot easier to market overseas than it was in the days when we didn’t have it.

Command of a foreign language is, of course, very good for this. But it should come as no surprise to you that the largest group of foreign tourists doesn’t require any special language skills. I’m referring of course to Canadians and Great Britons. And there are other English-speaking foreign countries to think about.

And what about countries that have English as a second language at their command? Most Germans and Dutch are pretty good at it, for example.

I spoke of Americans who may travel during this season, but don’t forget, other countries have different patterns to their years. What jumps to mind is the southern hemisphere. If they travel in their summer they’re here in our winter. The middle class in India is growing, for example, what time of year are they likely to travel?

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NYC...  
*....the whole world is coming  
By bus! By train!  
You can’t explain  
Their yen for NYC*

from the song NYC from the Broadway musical, ANNIE

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Speaking of recession (okay, no one in the government is using the “R” word but if you were to talk to anyone in, say, my native metro area—Detroit—I think that they would rather readily cozy up to the term) New York has dodged the bullet thus far for a reason that has held for a long time in it’s history: Diversification.

New York has never been a “one industry” town. If one thing falters, there’s always something else to get involved in. It doesn’t hurt to maybe “plow another field” a little bit. At the August GANYC membership meeting we talked about the various other occupations members are or were involved in aside from guiding. We heard from a part time waiter, interior designer and even a former show girl! You may want to keep a little something else going, yourself, if you can.

I sincerely hope that all of this advice turns out to be totally useless for the reason that the future of NYC tourism continues on its meteoric rise. But if it doesn’t, well, just some things for you to keep in mind.

*Tony Di Sante  
GANYC President*

## WEBSITES WORTH USING

by Jared Goldstein

One of my go-to sites is the result of New York City having the benefit of having an information billionaire as Mayor. **NYC.GOV** has links to all the government agencies' websites, general announcements, and ways to contact the agency Commissioners.

This summer, during a Heat Wave Warning, **NYC.GOV** featured links to the locations of Public City Cooling Centers. I was able to find a cooling center on the route of a walking tour, that I had to give that day in the middle of the heat in Chinatown.

Come October, **NYC.GOV**, through the Department of Health, will list where you can get a free flu shot, even if there is rationing of shots at private providers. In the meantime, you can sign up for Emergency Notifications to be sent to your cell phone, known as Notify NYC, look up the Staten Island Ferry Schedule, learn about the Waterfalls or other NYC events and news, learn about the locations of films and shows around town, check the traffic, or learn about our \$59 Billion budget. NYC.gov is a huge resource.

If the Web is not your thing, you can call **311** to get the same information. **311** agents can be heard tapping away at **NYC.GOV** in the background of your call.

Good tour guides often spice up their tours of the town with random facts and news. Did you know that Manhattan's population is comparable to Idaho, Brooklyn's to Nevada, and Staten Island to Wyoming? Interesting news articles and tips, such as today's history of chewing gum being manufactured first on Staten Island, pictures of the 9/11 Memorial Pavilion, and more. Since 2003 **GOTHAMIST.COM** has become the most popular NYC blog.

If you want to experience New York City from the perspective of a lover of the city or a visitor to it **NEWYORKOLOGY.COM** features events and happenings, and includes countdowns to when popular exhibits, events or tickets are running out of time or space. It covers New York sports, theatre, cultural development, and cocktails.

You can add your own tours to the general calendar of NYC events at **NYCPLAYGROUND.COM**. For your enrichment, the Municipal Arts Society offers wonderfully researched architectural and urban planning oriented walking tours every month at **MAS.ORG/TOURS/#WALKING-TOURS**.

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## World Trade Center Update

### *Keeping You Posted*

by Tony Di Sante

- Standing next to the now scaffold-less Federal Office Building at 90 Church allows an unobstructed view of the Cross next to St. Peter's across the street. Ditto the view of the Woolworth Building from the Barclay side of the building.
- The Survivor's Staircase has been moved and is now in "The Pit."
- One of the few renderings of the new buildings is on the south side of #7 World Trade Center. You can actually *see* it now that the Staircase has been moved! Move close to the entrance of the PATH train and look back at it.
- The information kiosk has been moved to Vesey at W. Broadway. It has excellent renderings of the memorials, the memorial plaza and the museum.
- At the top of the escalator on the Vesey Street footbridge, there is a very good rendering of the Transit Hub roof, just overhead. As you peer out of the bridge you can see the progress of the Freedom Tower, now just cresting street level. The Liberty Street footbridge provides another view of the Freedom Tower's progress.
- The steel beam interior of the new 5 World Financial Center (West and Vesey Street), to be occupied by Goldman-Sachs, is now at its full height of 43 stories.
- From the Winter Garden, looking straight across to the far side of the site under Church Street, there is a view of the construction of the connecting tunnel of the Transit Hub that will connect the WTC to the Fulton Street subway station.
- There is still a rendering of the new buildings, across Greenwich Street from the Fireman's Memorial. This one best illustrates the buildings and memorials together.
- Only from inside the turnstiles of the PATH station can you see the beginnings of the stunning Transit Hub roof by Santiago Calatrava on the west side of the station.
- At the southernmost fence of the station, looking up at the east wall you can see the former entrance tube of

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# THE LATE, GREAT STAN THOMASHAW

by Moses Gates

One of the places we tour guides often run into each other is the Fulton Ferry landing. A couple months ago when I was there, I saw the blue bus and decided to go say hi to some of my old workmates. We chatted for bit, gossiping about the various things that had happened in the city while I was gone. When I went to go back to my group one of my former co-workers, a driver, said to me "Oh yeah, the old man - he die." The "old man" she was talking about was one of my favorite colleagues: tour guide extraordinaire, Stan Thomashaw.

Stan was a lot more than his job and deserves a much better eulogy from a better friend. I was out of the country for his funeral, so I don't know if he got it, and I don't know Stan in any other context than that of a tour guide. And as a tour guide he was the best.

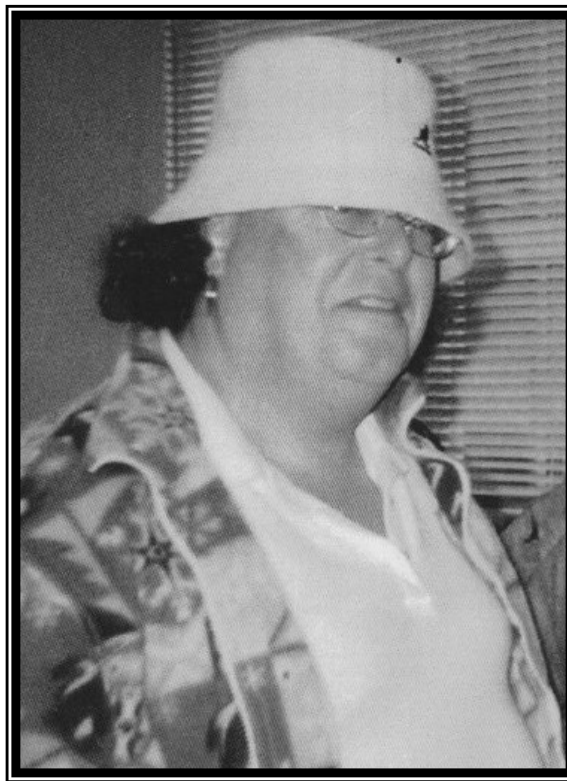
First (and most importantly), he knew the city, which is the highest praise I can give any New Yorker. Stan knew the history, and the architecture, and the culture, sure. But he knew the city not like a historian, or an architect, or a docent. He knew the city like a 30-year cabbie (which was appropriate, he used to be a cabbie), or a bike messenger, or a Private Eye in the old 50s paperbacks. He knew the city from the ground up, and kept that knowledge sharp by letting it out to people every day. You could blindfold Stan, drop him off at a random corner anywhere in the boroughs, and he could do a tour. Heck, you could probably throw a time machine into the equation, dial up a random year between 1609 and now, and he could still do it. The best compliment I ever got at that job – the one that left me smiling the rest of the day, the one that made me feel like I was a real tour guide – was when Stan said "you know Moses, despite all your bullshit, I hear you give a halfway decent tour."

Second, Stan was a character. Being a good tour guide isn't ultimately about just knowing the facts and the stories. Every good guide I know is a character in some way. I don't mean that they play a character while they do their tour - being a character isn't about being someone else, it's about truly being yourself: well, perhaps yourself with a bit of exaggeration. Stan, despite being a bald, raspy-voiced, overweight Jew from Brooklyn, decided his best look was lipstick, pearls, and a white snap purse. Legend has it he was fired from the red bus for refusing to

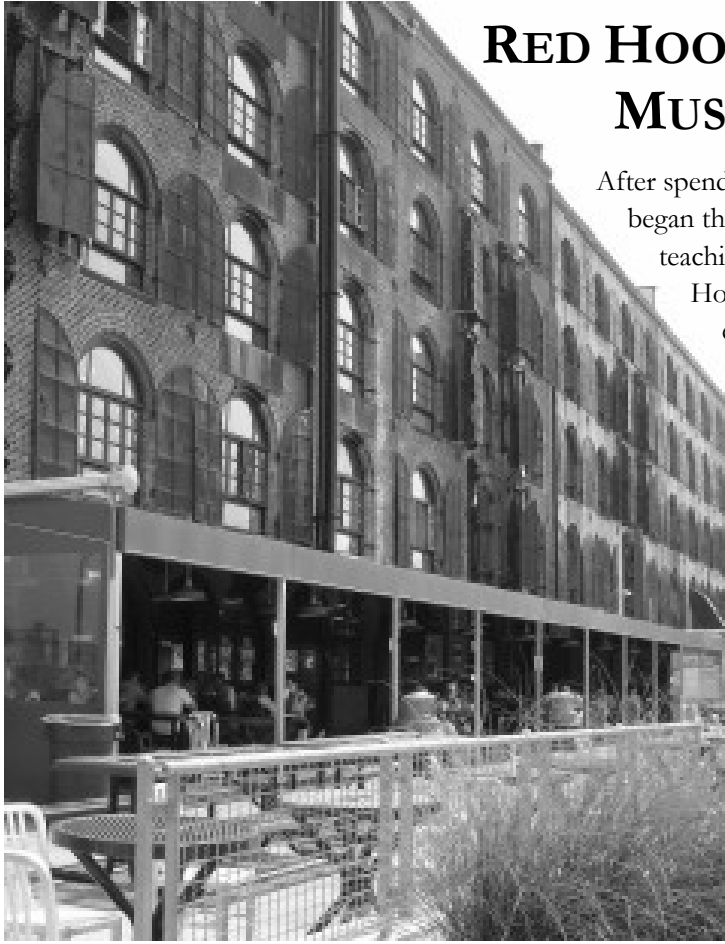
stop wearing a dress to work. I never saw him with a dress, but he did constantly insist that the tattered pink shorts he wore were not actually shorts but a "cut skirt." It never seemed strange or out of place though, because in that distinctive New York way, Stan was himself, and was more comfortable with that than most other people I knew. He could make the most conservative Midwestern family feel perfectly at home on a bus guided by a bombastic, radical left-wing New Yorker dressed like a disheveled 1950s housewife. *That's* character.

Third, he was one of the hardest workers, and best hustlers I ever knew. Despite being old, in ill

health, and with knees that would barely allow him to get up the stairs, Stan would regularly put in more hours than almost anyone else at the place. 12 hours a day, 6 days a week were a regular thing with him. And as we all know, this isn't a 12-hour office day. This is 12 hours, outdoors (rain or shine), where finding 5 minutes to pee is a luxury. I've always prided myself on being a worker but at half Stan's age, I would have collapsed from working so much. But working only gets you so far in the tour guide game. Being a tour guide is a hustle, not a job. So you've got to be a hustler, which Stan was in spades. Stan got the best tips



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Fairway Market in 1860's Warehouse

## RED HOOK & WATERFRONT MUSEUM FAM TOUR

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After spending two years pumping mud out of the bilges, he then began the journey to fulfill his dream of founding a museum and teaching people about the harbor. The barge spent sometime at Hoboken and then at Liberty Park in Jersey City (where I first encountered it) before settling at Red Hook.

Despite a series of setbacks, David continued to pursue his dream. In 1998 the barge leaked and shipworms were discovered. The entire bottom had to be replaced at a dry dock in Waterford, New York. When the barge returned to Red Hook, the pier had collapsed, but he persisted. A new pier was built and the barge was back in business.

David offers educational programs and entertainment for a variety of visitors, harking back to the days when showboats plied the waters. He has public open hours on Thursdays from 4 to 8 p. m. and on Saturdays from 1 to 5 p. m. More information can be found at [waterfrontmuseum.org](http://waterfrontmuseum.org). David can be reached at (718) 624-4719 or [dsharp@waterfrontmuseum.org](mailto:dsharp@waterfrontmuseum.org).

At the program's conclusion, Harvey Paul Davidson of the Industry Relations Committee presented David with a certificate indicating that his museum is a visitor friendly site.

After lunch at Fairway, the group strolled over to Pier 41 where they indulged in chocolate-covered key lime pie on a stick at Steve's Key Lime Pies. They walked off the calories by heading for the Louis Valentino Pier which affords a fabulous view of the Statue of Liberty. Then some headed back to the ferry pier for the trip back to Manhattan, tired, but definitely not hungry. Several intrepid guides lingered to browse the stores on Van Brunt Street and then headed for the food department of IKEA.

**PAT GUIDA** specializes in walking tours in New York and Jersey City. She is a member of the Education Committee. [pdg293@comcast.net](mailto:pdg293@comcast.net)

## BOOK REVIEW

BY PAT GUIDA

*Rivington Street and Union Square – (two novels) Music by Meredith Tax*

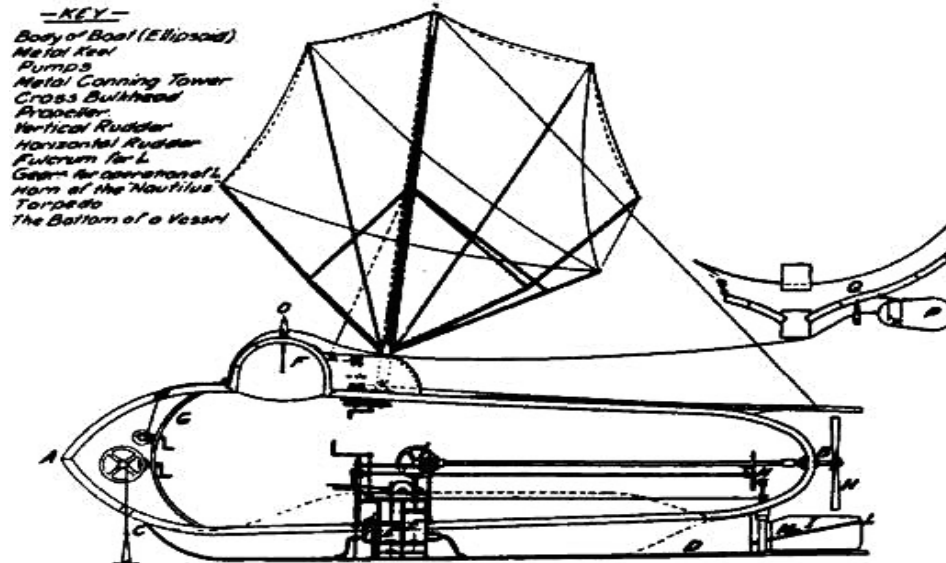
Meredith Tax is a historian and an activist for women's rights. These two novels chronicle the lives of the fictional Levy family as they flee from the pogroms in Russia in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to start a new life on New York's Lower East side.

Although the parents cling to the old traditions, the two Levy daughters are independent and outspoken. The novels trace the changes in the family against the backdrop of labor strikes, the growth of unions, women's suffrage, World War I, the depression, and the efforts of the Joint Distribution Committee and Zionists to rescue European Jews from the Nazis. Although they are fiction, the names of real people and locations are mentioned throughout the books.

# THE MILITARY SIDE OF ROBERT FULTON

## ON THE WATERFRONT

by Hal Weiner



As I go around on the top of my bus, when I get to South Street Seaport and look across at Fulton Ferry Landing, well, I think first of Gen. Washington with his back to the water; saved from a total collapse of the Revolution on August 29, 1776 by a well disciplined bunch of Gloucester fisherman cobbled into a fighting force known as Col. Glover's Marblehead Militia. It is also, of course, where Robert Fulton launched his steamboat service with the steamboat Nassau in 1814.

Known to tour guides and the general public as the great developer of the steamboat, we tend to ignore Fulton's prowess as a military specialist, naval genius and inventor of the submarine. Remember the first nuclear boat, the USS NAUTILUS (SSN-571)? The Navy seemed oblivious to the Fulton vessel built in 1800. Instead, it assigned the name to a 12 gun frigate in the War of 1812 and later to four other ships, everything from a small patrol boat to a non-nuclear submarine until the last of the line got the name in 1954. But pictured above is Fulton's design of 1800, ten years earlier.

Fulton had written a monograph, "Torpedo War and Submarine Explosions" as a Fellow of the United States Military and Philosophical Society, which was printed here in New York City at the shop of William Elliott which could be found (back then in 1810) at 114 Water Street. Addressed to President James Madison and both houses of Congress, it was inscribed on the title page

"The Liberty of the Seas Will Be the Happiness of the Earth."

Please remember this is over a hundred years before modern undersea warfare, and yet his devices were so effective that when he offered them to the British prior to the War of 1812 Parliament offered him compensation if he would shelve the project and promise never to develop it, because they felt at the time it was inhumane and a violation of the rules of warfare. He angrily refused, saying he would not do it for 20,000 pounds sterling a year if the freedom of his own country would ever depend

on his producing these devices. (It's a good thing that he did, or we would probably be talking with cockney accents and eating bangers and mash instead of hot dogs on a bun.)

For further research consult a great book on the subject, *Old Steamboat Days on the Hudson River*, by David Lear Buckman, The Grafton Press, 1907 (out of print).

**Hal Weiner** is a former Navy officer and an expert on all things nautical and photographic. If you would like to tour with Hal, contact [NEWYORKNATIVE@AOL.COM](mailto:NEWYORKNATIVE@AOL.COM).

### WEBSITES WORTH USING

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If the Villages are of particular interest, be sure to visit the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation's [GVSHP.ORG/EVENTS.HTM](http://GVSHP.ORG/EVENTS.HTM).

Finally, an update on vanishing NYC blogs, here's another one that celebrates what is great and unique about NYC today and yesterday with an emphasis on vernacular dining and living [HUNTERGATHERERNYC.COM](http://HUNTERGATHERERNYC.COM).

**Jared 'the tour guide' Goldstein** enjoys New York City culture and social history. He has worked in non-profit housing, community organizing, and Internet development for the non-profit and dot-com worlds. He can be reached at [JAREDG@PIPELINE.COM](mailto:JAREDG@PIPELINE.COM)

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# CELEBRITIES IN THE CITY

by Jim Dykes

LOUISE HAY (*You Can Heal Your Life*) believes: "whatever energy we put out, we get back...the universe listens." I've always had celebrity experiences because this is the energy I put out...and consequently these have become part of my tours. Years ago I worked in P.R. at Radio City Music Hall and this led me to meet various production teams and thus work on mega-charity events like *Night of 100 Stars* and its sequels.

I was assigned to the Green Room which was like putting the mouse in charge of the cheese. My job was to keep the celebs happy with flattery and small talk and escort them to/from the stage, trying not to gush or drool on them. Celebs were running around backstage like giggling chorus kids getting pictures and autographs of other celebrities. Radio City only has about 20 dressing rooms, so we were forced to pack them with major names. Even though they were all used to their own "star" dressing rooms, most didn't argue (it was for charity). I recently came across my dressing room assignment sheets and it's a hoot to see who we threw in together. This is just a (heavily edited) sample:

**201:** OLIVIA DEHAVILLAND, BERNADETTE PETERS, LINDA LAVIN, LANA TURNER, BETTE DAVIS, GRACE KELLY.

**211:** DUSTIN HOFFMAN, JOHN FORSYTHE, JEREMY IRONS, DONNY OSMOND, DANNY KAYE, SIDNEY POITIER, ROBERT PRESTON, SIR LAURENCE OLIVIER, CHRISTOPHER REEVE (before), VINCENT GARDENIA, ED ASNER AND JAMES EARL JONES.

**302:** was the "glamour room": DIAHANN CARROLL, LINDA EVANS, JOAN COLLINS (until the Dynasty gals demanded separate rooms!), RAQUEL WELCH, ANN-MARGRET, JACQUELINE BISSET, BROOKE SHIELDS, JACLYN SMITH, CLAUDIA CARDINALE, ELLEN BURSTYN, PRISCILLA PRESLEY, SUSAN LUCCI, DYAN CANNON, LYNDA CARTER, ANGIE DICKINSON, ALI MACGRAW and JANE SEYMOUR all sitting at tiny makeup tables designed for Rockettes. Next door were sports legends: DON BUDGE, HOWARD COSELL, JOE DIMAGGIO, HANK AARON.

**303:** DEBBIE ALLEN, MARGE CHAMPION, SANDY DUNCAN, GEORGIA ENGEL, NANETTE FABRAY, BONNIE FRANKLIN, GINGER ROGERS, GWEN VERDON, JULIET PROWE, JANE POWELL, CHITA RIVERA and ELAINE JOYCE.

**401:** LUCIE ARNAZ, MARISA BERENSEN, CAROL CHANNING, PETULA CLARK, WHOOPI GOLDBERG, PATTI LABELLE, MICHELLE LEE, DINAH SHORE, MAUREEN STAPLETON.

**207:** DR. CHRISTIAN BARNARD, WALTER CRONKITE, BARBARA WALTERS, BUZZ ALDRIN, JOHN UPDIKE,



**Jim Dykes**

ROSA PARKS, MARTHA GRAHAM, DR. LINUS PAULING, and DR. SEUSS.

**702:** ANNE BAXTER, MEREDITH BAXTER BIRNEY, NELL CARTER, TYNE DALY, JULIE HARRIS, KATE JACKSON, JENNIFER O'NEILL, CHARLOTTE RAE, LUCILLE BALL and CAROL BURNETT.

**604:** LLOYD BRIDGES, CHARLES BRONSON, YUL BRYNNER, MICHAEL CAINE, CAB CALLOWAY, BERT CONVEY, BILLY CRYSTAL, MATT DILLON, RICHARD DREYFUSS, CHARLES DURNING, BOB FOSSE, DAVID FROST, BEN GAZZARA, JIM HENSON, ROCK HUDSON, ED KOCH, VINCENT PRICE, JIMMY STEWART, TONY RANDALL.

After this, I worked for many other celebrity-packed events...but none was as much fun as my first: NIGHT OF 100 STARS. In future columns I'll have more celebrity stories from these fabulous events I was lucky to be part of.

**Jim Dykes**, licensed New York guide and GANYC member, is the co-founder of Rich and Famous Tours. For more info, visit [RICHANDFAMOUS TOURS.COM](http://RICHANDFAMOUS TOURS.COM) or [JIMDYKES.COM](http://JIMDYKES.COM).

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## Glory in Gotham:

# CONGREGATION KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA

by Matthew Baker

As tour buses head up Allen Street on the Lower East Side, the small synagogue at 280 Broome Street is clearly visible, a few doors down on the left. The small congregation of Kehila Kedosha Janina is neither Sephardic nor Ashkenazi but Romaniote. Never heard of the Romaniotes? That's because this charming little house of worship is the only Romaniote synagogue in the Western Hemisphere.

After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D., a group of Jews was sent to Rome on a slave ship. Forced to Greece by a storm, these Romaniotes formed their own unique customs that set them apart from any other branch of Judaism.

In 1492, when Spain's Sephardic Jews were expelled from their native land, they settled in massive numbers in Ottoman Empire Greece and many Romaniotes were assimilated into Sephardic culture. Only a few held on to the old traditions and, today, there are fewer than 6,000 Romaniote Jews in Greece.

Already "a minority within a minority", as the synagogue's website [KKJSM.ORG](http://KKJSM.ORG) declares, the Romaniotes' number was further decreased during the Holocaust when 86% of all Greek Jews were murdered. Greece was, in fact, second only to Poland in terms of the percentage of its Jewish population lost in the Holocaust. One perspective on this story is depicted in the harrowing movie, *Triumph of the Spirit*, starring Willem Dafoe.

Recently, the Museum of Biblical Art featured an exhibit by Vincent Giordano, entitled *Before the Flame Goes Out*, the title of which bears poignant witness to the denomination's teetering on the verge of extinction.

Even since its beginning in 1927, the denomination's single representation in North America has had to make concessions to the outside world. Due to the Manhattan street grid, the synagogue faces north/south rather than the traditional Romaniote

east/west. The women's gallery is reached by an interior stairway rather than its own separate entrance. And the echal and bimah, normally on the east and west walls respectively, are found here on the north wall and in the center of the sanctuary.

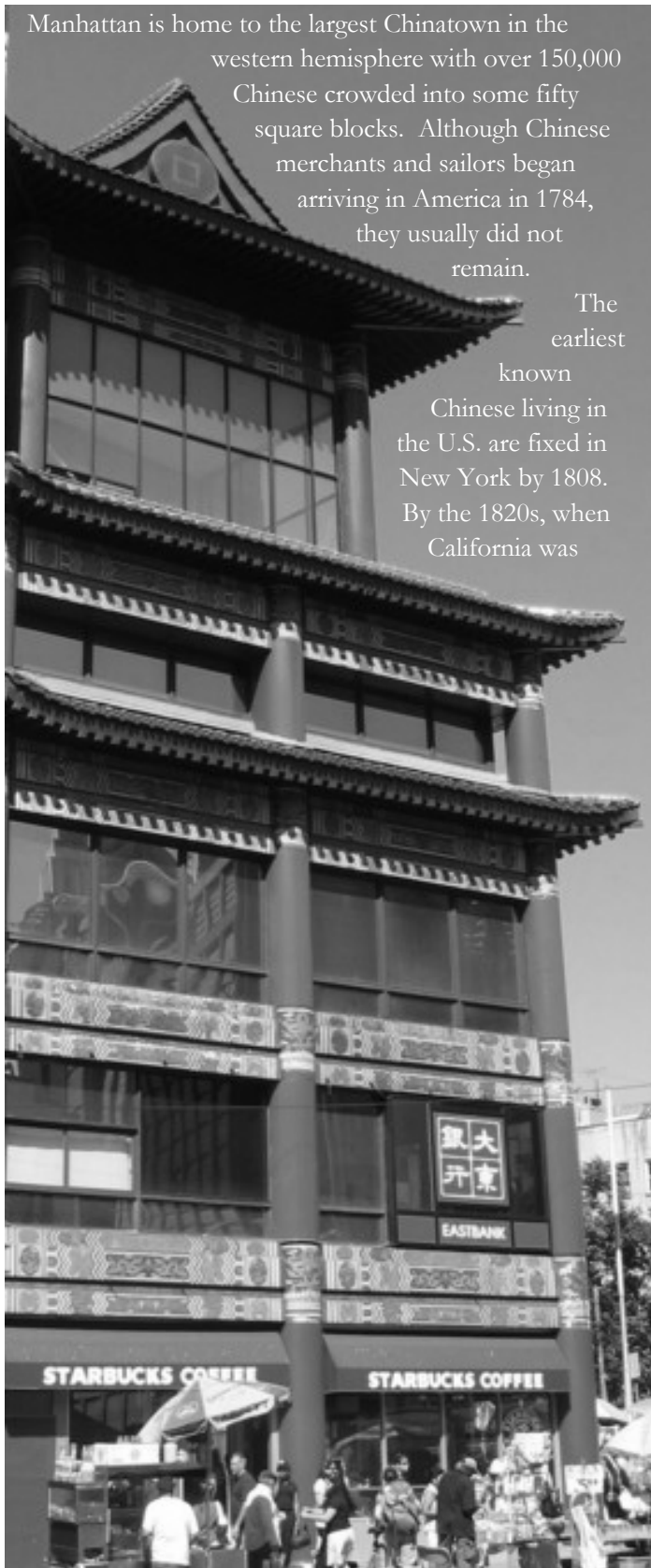
Today, the struggling synagogue also includes a museum within its walls, open on Sundays from 11am to 4pm. Special tours for parties of 10 to 50 people, including a kosher lunch, can also be booked for \$18 per person. Such a visit is surely a welcome variation from the usual focus points of the ever popular "Jewish Lower East Side" tours.

**Matthew Baker** is a former Presbyterian liturgist and song leader. Currently, he gives tours that focus on New York's history, cuisine, architecture, and cultural diversity. To book a tour of New York's houses of worship or other great sites, contact him at [baker.tours@yahoo.com](mailto:baker.tours@yahoo.com) or learn about his other tours at [BEAUTIFULNEWYORKTOURS.COM](http://BEAUTIFULNEWYORKTOURS.COM).



# THE BIRTH OF CHINATOWN

by Michael Gray



Manhattan is home to the largest Chinatown in the western hemisphere with over 150,000 Chinese crowded into some fifty square blocks. Although Chinese merchants and sailors began arriving in America in 1784, they usually did not remain.

The earliest known Chinese living in the U.S. are fixed in New York by 1808. By the 1820s, when California was

called Californios and San Francisco was known as Yerba Buena, Chinese sailors were living in Corlears Hook in Manhattan. By the 1850s, at least 150 Chinese lived in New York and a man named Ah Sue had opened a candy and tobacco store on Cherry Street.

But how is it that Chinatown came to be? Within one month of the accidental discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in Coloma in January of 1848, two Chinese servants left their master and arrived on the scene. Soon, people from around the world were arriving in California to try to strike it rich. At first, the experience of the Chinese was no different from that of Europeans or other new Americans. But soon, anti-Sino discrimination and violence ensued. In Tuolumne County, in 1849, a group of white miners drove 60 Chinese miners off their claim. In 1852, California passed a law preventing Chinese from making mining claims. In 1871, 15 Chinese were lynched in Los Angeles and four more were murdered in Chico.

In 1878, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Chinese were ineligible for U.S. citizenship and, four years later, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act – the only time in U.S. history that a specific ethnic group has been targeted for exclusion. While it prevented both skilled and unskilled Chinese laborers from immigrating; officials, scholars, merchants, students and teachers were exempted. Chinese laborers already in the U.S. were not allowed to bring in their wives and were basically barred from all licensed professions. In the face of this growing violence and xenophobic atmosphere Chinese started migrating to New York City, San Francisco and other large cities for protection.

While some 28 million white Europeans arrived on our shores between 1882 and 1930, the Chinese population dropped from 200,000 to 75,000. The National Origins Act of 1924 set immigration quotas at 2% of "each national group" but barred the foreign born wives of U.S. citizens of Chinese descent. In 1943, with the U.S. now allied with the Nationalists in China under Chiang Kai-Shek, the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed. Chinese were now "free" to immigrate but at the old 1924 law, which was based on numbers from the 1890 census. The result: only 105 Chinese a year were allowed in. Meanwhile, 13,000 Chinese served in the U.S. Armed Forces in WW II. The War Brides Act of 1945 allowed some 7,500 Chinese women who had married American servicemen to immigrate.

The McCarran-Waller Act of 1952 allowed greater numbers of Chinese students in to study and, in 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Act was passed, abolishing quotas in place since 1924. A limit of 170,000 new immigrants per year was set with no more than 20,000 from any one country. Family re-unification immigrants were unlimited. Taiwan was granted the 20,000-immigrant number and Hong Kong only 600. It was during this time that the Chinatown population greatly expanded. In 1979, when U.S.-Sino relations were normalized, China was also allowed the maximum of 20,000 immigrants per year. The Chinese population in the U.S. rose from 240,000 in 1960 to 2.9 million in 2000. Since 1985 some 300,000 Chinese from Fujian province have migrated to the U.S. with many settling in New York City; helping to extend Chinatown eastward across Bowery and into the Lower East Side.

**Michael Gray** is NYC's only full time Chinatown tour guide. For more information, visit [www.nycchinatown.com](http://www.nycchinatown.com).

## WTC UPDATE

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the "Hudson Tubes," which contained the pre-PATH commuter trains to New Jersey. You can now get a sense of its size. "Hey, it really is big enough to hold a train!"

- If you take the PATH train ride to and from Exchange Place, NJ (about 20 minutes, round trip) allows another perspective of the Freedom Tower, re-entering from NJ.
- And you will see the Survivor's Staircase rather impressively standing there with plenty of space around it, awaiting its place in the stairway of the 9/11 Museum.



## The Late, Great...

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of everyone, in no small part because he let the tourists know they were supposed to about every 5 minutes. We used to joke he did everything to get a buck out of the tourists but hit them over the head and rifle through their pockets for change. Once, he told me he was doing a tour when the first plane hit the World Trade Center. "So I said to them, 'well, the bad news is that we're not going to the Statue of Liberty, but the good news is that now you get more time with me.' And then the second plane hit, so I took them straight to the Port Authority. But I still hit them up for tips when they got off." And I'm sure the tourists tipped. They should have – Stan was worth it.

**T**his is what I first thought of when my former co-worker told me "the old man – he die." That here was someone who had worked so hard for such a thankless company for the last few years in order to try and retire in a little bit of comfort, and never ended up getting the chance to do so for even just a short while. I was sad to hear the news, but happy to have know him for a short time at the end of his life. It wasn't much, but after I heard the news I wore a string of pearls and bright red fingernail polish in his honor.

**Moses Gates** is a licensed New York City tour guide, as well as a writer, traveler, urbanist, and graduate of Hunter College's Masters of Urban Planning program. To book a tour with Moses, visit [ALLCITYNEWYORK.COM](http://ALLCITYNEWYORK.COM).

## DISAPPEARING NY LANGUAGE

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sewers on typical city streets were placed 100 feet apart so if you were a 2 or 3 sewer man you were a Ruthian slugger.

The proliferation of organized leagues as well as the greater number of automobiles on the streets has made the urban improvised playgrounds part of the disappearing city scene and its language.

**Lee Gelber**, *Dean of Guides*, is a prolific and versatile tour guide and trainer of new tour guides. He has worked for various tour companies in the city and runs his own tour company, Here Is New York Tours.



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