



# Civic News

The Newsletter of the  
Park Slope Civic Council

Spring-Summer 2015

## Ortner Awards Winners Honored



Congratulations to 2014 Evelyn and Everett Ortner Preservation Awards winners recognized at the Council's January meeting at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music. Pictured (clockwise from upper left) are honorees: Horrigan Development for Exterior Rehabilitation; Ivan Brice Architecture for Exterior Restoration; Lincoln Place Block Association for Neighborhood Intervention; and joint venture partners Seth Brown, Aspen Equities and Herbert and Gail Solomon for New Construction. The Awards Program honors building projects and activities that help preserve the charm and beauty of Park Slope while encouraging enhancements through renovations, new construction and interventions. **Read more at [parkslopeciviccouncil.org](http://parkslopeciviccouncil.org)**

## 9th Street Station Upgrade Takes Shape

A lot of FOFA activity has centered on the 4th Avenue/9th Street transit hub. On November 21, FOFA and community partners put up a pop-up installation at Washington Park, "FixThisPublicSpace," where the community contributed ideas on livable-street amenities that could improve the station without major capital expenses. At the February Trustees meeting, MTA representatives gave an update on the progress of work at the station. Completion of the exterior and stairways is due this April. The MTA is developing a request for proposals for leasing the six retail sites at the station, scheduled in early 2016. Elevators are not presently planned for the station, nor is additional lighting or exterior street signage. The MTA agreed to meet with NYCDOT to review lighting further, long identified as a priority by many residents. The MTA did agree to a "walk-through" with residents to review the adequacy of signage inside the station. **Read more at [parkslopeciviccouncil.org](http://parkslopeciviccouncil.org)**

## Livable Streets Workshop

On March 22, over 40 members of the community and Civic Council Trustees gathered under the aegis of the Livable Streets Committee to look at how to make our streets more livable. Four areas of interest were highlighted: "Aging in Place," led by Judy Willig, Executive Director of Heights and Hills; "Independence of the Disabled," led by Joan Peters, Executive Director of the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled; "Public Art," led by Abby Subak, Director of Arts Gowanus; "Streets/Sidewalks/Curbsides/Streetscape," led by Adam White, longtime advocate for pedestrians and cyclists. Ben Fried, Editor-in-Chief, Streetsblog, moderated. The goal was to generate concrete proposals that can be taken to elected officials, government agencies, and the private sector to be discussed, refined and realized. It will help define the role the Civic Council will continue to play regarding livable streets. A report of the workshop will be forthcoming. We are also looking to discern new leadership for the Committee from among the participants. **Read more at [parkslopeciviccouncil.org](http://parkslopeciviccouncil.org)**

## From Our Presidents . . .

The Park Slope Civic Council is as busy as ever! With the Livable Streets workshop just behind us, we're now looking ahead to how the Livable Streets Committee will be re-formed as a result. Upcoming events include Spring Civic Sweep and our Annual House Tour. We've got a roster of very impressive trustee nominees to be voted on at the June meeting. We're really excited about putting the finishing touches on our sophisticated NEW logo, which will enable us to "rebrand and refresh." Additionally, we're coordinating with the Grand Army Plaza Greenmarket to see how we might bring produce and other wholesome products to our friends at CHIPS.

It's not too soon for us to be looking toward Autumn events with Food for Thought, Civic Sweep, a small-business forum, the Arts Council -- and so much more! Our steadfast committees like Forth on Fourth and Historic District continue to advocate for the community at the 4th & 9th Street station and with Landmarks, respectively

And...membership is growing! We have old friends returning and new neighbors just learning about what we do. We need your help to spread the word! If "many hands make light work," and "the more the merrier" are true, your help in recruiting, participating and lending your voice to continue to make Park Slope a more vibrant, economically robust, cleaner and greener place to live is invaluable. From the bottom of our hearts, we say, Thank You! - *Gilly & Judith*

## 56th Annual Park Slope House Tour!

The 2015 Park Slope House Tour, self-guided and organized by the Park Slope Civic Council, will take place Sunday, May 17, noon-5:30 PM. Seven homes will be on view, with shuttle buses providing continuous service to pick-up and drop-off sites near the homes. Ticket-holders will receive a handsome illustrated brochure describing the history and interior of each home. At 6:00, there will be a lecture by local architect-historian, Francis Morrone. The House Tour funds the Park Slope Civic Council's Annual Grants Program.

### Highlights of Some of the Homes on the Park Slope House Tour

1. Striking cherry and oak woodwork, original stained glass and beautiful Bradbury & Bradbury and William Morris wallpapers are highlights of this **1903 Romanesque Revival** home (below left). The library features oak bookshelves with leaded-glass doors and a coffered natural-oak ceiling. A young man by the name of Barak Obama lived in an apartment on the top floor in the mid-1980s!

photo by Nigel Spang

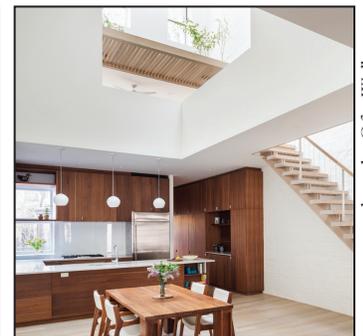


photo by Ofer Wolberger

2. The façade of this **1903 Victorian Gothic** home (above right) conceals a dramatic contemporary interior with an atrium-like space and multiple skylights. *Excerpts from other house descriptions:* 3. Beautiful oak woodwork greets you as you enter the unusually large entrance hall

*continued on p.4*

# Meet the Park Slope Civic Council

## Melinda Morris

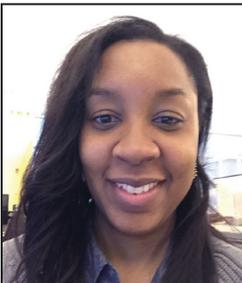
photo by Karen Wise



Just out of college and priced out of Manhattan, Trustee Melinda Morris found herself renting an apartment in the South Slope in 1995. “The community felt more like a neighborhood and you could get more for your buck,” she says. She and roommates kept throwing big parties as a way to convince their Manhattan friends to move here. A fundraiser and event planner for Covenant House and other non-profits, Melinda decided to open Lion in the Sun when she

realized that there was nowhere in the Slope to buy wrapping paper, invitations or greeting cards. Soon after, she joined the Chamber of Commerce and later the Civic Council as a way to create interest and enthusiasm in local businesses. “I really care about small business and community, and the Council allows you to focus on what matters to you. You can cater your interest to the community because of the breadth of the organization and its impact,” she says. Melinda, who is co-chair of the Outreach Committee, enjoys her work organizing the Council’s Food for Thought event, which benefits scholarships for outstanding seniors graduating from each of the Secondary Schools at John Jay High School. “There’s always amazing food from local restaurants, drinks, music and fun. Going forward, Melinda hopes to retain her small business focus. “What made Park Slope great were the mom and pop shops. I hate to see them disappear.”

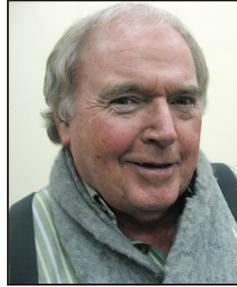
## Time Darden



It is Park Slope’s proximity to Prospect Park and the convenient walkability of the neighborhood that appeals to Time Darden, who has been a member of the Civic Council since 2013. Time, who has lived in Park Slope for eight years, decided to join after participating in one of the Council’s Civic Sweeps, a chance for neighbors to come together to weed and mulch trees and pick up litter on sidewalks. She’s been enjoying her time on the Council ever since. As the

Database/Outreach Administrator, Time helps to coordinate member engagement and manage data and correspondence for membership and events like Food for Thought and the Annual House Tour. Her goal for the upcoming year is to help to grow and retain membership. When it comes to recruiting new members, Time likes to say that it feels good to contribute to the community and to play a tangible part in its betterment. She believes that being on the Council strengthens the social ties and infrastructure that make Park Slope a nice place to work and play. For Time, there are palpable rewards for being on the Council: “I like the community engagement, teamwork and sense of camaraderie I get from working as part of the Civic Council,” she says. “I see the positive impact that the organization has on the community and the way in which the vigilance and hard work keeps the neighborhood healthy, vibrant and current.”

## Tom Miskel



Trustee Tom Miskel has fond memories of the Park Slope of his youth, a tight-knit working-class neighborhood. “I remember kids playing stick ball in the street and girls playing with dolls on their stoops. Everyone knew each other and there was closeness between people.” His parents lived on 8th Street where Tom was raised. “They didn’t call it Park Slope then. It was the Slope or South Brooklyn.” Tom joined the Park Slope Civic Council in 1997 where he has per-

formed many roles, including President. He currently runs the Council’s annual Toys for Tots campaign and is a member of the Scholarship, Finance, Grants and Archive Committees. In addition to his work at the Council, Tom is a Board Member of the Prospect Park YMCA, the Saint Savior Catholic Academy and Community Board 6 where he serves on the Landmark Land Use and Permits, Environmental, and Transportation committees. As a member of Veterans’ Committees of both Kings and Richmond counties, Tom participates in the planning of veterans’ activities and is the de facto caretaker of the Veterans Museum and Library at the 14th Regiment Armory on 8th Avenue. Tom is especially proud of his work on the Scholarship Committee at the Civic Council. “I believe that scholarships and teaching are the basis for all civilization.” Still, it is his memories of his childhood in Park Slope that motivate him. “I got involved to keep Park Slope alive. It’s a way to be invested in where you live, a great way to be part of the neighborhood, and learn about what’s going on.”

## Josh Levin



Arriving in Park Slope with a master’s degree in urban planning from the University of Colorado, Josh Levin got a crash course in community-based planning when he moved into an apartment on Tenth Street near Fourth Avenue. A public committee member for Community Board 6 at the time, he attended a Civic Council press conference about the dangers of the Avenue’s cross walks and was inspired to get involved. He joined the Council soon after

and became a founding member of the Forth on Fourth Avenue Committee, with its focus on turning Fourth Avenue into a multi-use, safe, clean and green urban corridor. He also edited an influential report that grew out of a Fourth Avenue walking tour. Josh believes that Fourth Avenue has so much potential. “One day it could become calm and exciting and not be a defacto highway. One day children and parents can feel safe walking there.” Levin, who is currently Community Liaison for NYC Comptroller Scott M. Stringer, believes that the Civic Council is a great way to bring change to a community. “We need many voices to change policy. If people want change, it helps your representative government to hear from the Council when it champions an idea. It makes it that much easier to push things through,” he says.

## OUR MISSION

***The Civic Council’s mission is to understand the concerns of the various Park Slope constituencies and to select and implement effective responses through events, activities and advocacy efforts that engage the community and enhance our quality of life.***

## Thanks to our Government, Business and Professional Supporters!

Assembly Member Jim Brennan, Assembly Member Jo Ann Simon, Council Member Brad Lander, Council Member Stephen Levin, Lion in the Sun, North Flatbush BID, Park Slope Chamber of Commerce, Park Slope 5th Avenue BID, Matthew Pintchik



## Who We Are

Front row: Judith Lief, Joan Emerson, Josh Levy, Joni Kletter (and baby Micah), Candace Woodward, S.J. Avery, Melinda Morris, Sarah Gersowitz, Joe Rydell, Back Row: Chandru Murthi, Darryl Cook (retired), Kyle Johnson, Peter Bray, Thomas Miskel, Bob Braun, John Casson, Gilly Youner, Marty Goldin (retired), Kim Maier, Michael Cairl, Cathy Sokil Milnikiewicz, Martie McNabb. Missing from photo: Jeffrey Roth, Eliza Pepper and Lauri Schindler

## Our Committees in Action

**The Arts Festival** is a rapidly expanding group focused on a multi-faceted event for Fall 2016, to include residents of our neighborhood engaged in all aspects of the arts in a large scale curated/juried exhibition and installation of interactive works. It will be neighborhood-wide and incorporate artists' studios, local merchants, galleries and restaurants, as well as open-air performance, ongoing art installations, readings and publicly accessible site works. - *Gilly Youner, chair*

**The Committee on Trustees (COT)** consists of two Trustees and four PSCC members (non-Trustees) and is generally responsible for oversight of the governance functions of the Council. Among its specific responsibilities are recruiting, nominating and orienting new board members, working with the Executive Committee to ensure leadership succession, confirming active participation of board members at board meetings and on committees, assessing compliance with the Conflict of Interest Policy and reviewing and recommending changes to the Bylaws, as necessary. - *SJ Avery, Peter Bray, co-chairs*

**Forth on Fourth Avenue (FOFA)** provides an active forum and voice for people who live, work and make use of Fourth Avenue in order to identify and address community concerns. Objectives include improved safety; a greener, cleaner streetscape; a stronger design and aesthetic of the buildings as they relate to street-level activity; greater diversity of housing options on or near the avenue; greater economic vitality for diverse retail and commercial; and improved street experience of pedestrians, cyclists, commuters, drivers and residents who make use of Fourth Avenue. - *SJ Avery, Grace Freedman, co-chairs*

**The Grants Committee** reviews applications and selects recipients of Grants that are awarded annually, and which support programs in a variety of active, creative local organizations in the neighborhood, which in turn contribute greatly to our neighborhood's diversity and vitality. Grants are awarded to non-profit/non-commercial groups that serve the greater Park Slope community, and whose services, programs and projects are open to residents of Park Slope. - *Gilly Youner, chair*

**The Historic District Committee** preserves our neighborhood's special architecture and character through the expansion of the Park Slope Historic District. The committee advocates with property owners and other community stakeholders; canvasses homeowners within proposed expansion areas; and drives the landmark designation process forward through its advocacy with the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, elected officials and other government agencies. The committee also honors projects that enhance the area's historic character through bestowing the Ortner Preservation Awards. - *Peter Bray, chair*

**Toys for Tots** is a gift-collection drive organized by the Civic Council that helps local children and families in need celebrate the holiday. This year's record-breaking program provided over 2,900 gifts during the 2014 holiday season. - *Thomas Miskel, coordinator*

**The House Tour Committee** plans and executes the annual House Tours and strives to create events that showcase the beautiful residential architecture and display the diversity of interior design of Park Slope. Between January and May, the committee selects homes, recruits and organizes sitters, photographs and writes descriptions for the homes, designs the poster and street banner, prints tickets and brochures, raises funds and organizes a post-Tour lecture. Proceeds from ticket sales support our grants awards. - *Candace Woodward and Darryl Cook, co-chairs*

Besides the Livable Streets Community Workshop, the **Livable Streets Committee** has been active in organizing the Move NY community forum (Feb. 19) and in forming an information and response mechanism for upcoming film shoots in Park Slope. It will be active in the Park Slope Street Safety Partnership and in the traffic impacts working group for the New York Methodist Hospital expansion. Meetings occur on an as-needed basis; check the website for notices. - *Michael Cairl, acting chair*

**The Outreach Committee** brings awareness to and support for the Civic Council. Its annual fundraising event, Food for Thought, funds the scholarship program. Additional projects throughout the year include organizing informational and marketing efforts, coordinating sponsorships, recruitment of new members and partnering with all PSCC committees and other local organizations on various community issues and events. - *Melinda Morris, Sarah Gersowitz, co-chairs and Cathy Sokil Milnikiewicz, Membership chair*

**The Scholarship Committee** grants annual awards to one college-bound senior from each of the four high schools at The John Jay Campus in Park Slope. Criteria for these awards are based on volunteer and community service, scholarship, passion and counselor recommendation. Proceeds from the Civic Council's annual fundraiser, Food For Thought, have permitted the committee to increase the amount of scholarships in recent years, and helped build its reserve for future awards. - *Joan Emerson, Joe Rydell, co-chairs*

**The Sustainability Committee** advocates advancing Park Slope as a model of community sustainability. It provides information relating to sustainability issues, such as reduction of energy use and waste, and encouraging recycling (for example: our Suggestions for Green Holidays series). The Committee organizes events that bring the community together in helping the environment, such as the Fall and Spring Civic Sweeps and the Christmas tree recycling Mulchfest. Moving forward, the Committee will focus on long-term initiatives specific to the neighborhood, such as retrofitting historic buildings for alternative energy, engaging neighbors in community-wide educational activities and strengthening partnerships with other Park Slope organizations in support of its agenda. - *Chandru Murthi, chair*

**Upcoming Events**

**April 21 & every third Tuesday of the month** - Office Hours, Parish Bar, 223 7th Ave, 7-9:00 PM, meetup with PSCC and neighborhood folks

**April 26 - Spring Civic Sweep neighborhood cleanup**, Old Stone House in Washington Park on 5th Ave. at 4th St., 10 AM-2 PM, refreshments provided

**May 7 & first Thursday of the month (except July/Aug) - Park Slope Civic Council Board Meeting**, Old Stone House in Washington Park unless announced otherwise, 7-9:00 PM; Scholarship, Lovgren, Community Awards ceremony and 2015-16 slate voted in at the **June 4 Annual Meeting**, free and open to all

**May 17 - 56th Annual Park Slope House Tour & Lecture**, self-guided tour of seven beautiful Park Slope homes starting at Poly Prep Lower School, 50 PPW and 1st St., tickets required, noon-5:30 PM, followed by lecture at 6 PM.

**June 4 - 5th Annual Brooklyn Volunteer Fair**, Park Slope Armory YMCA, 361 15th St., 5:30-8:00 PM, representing over 100 Brooklyn-served organizations that rely on volunteers to enrich our communities

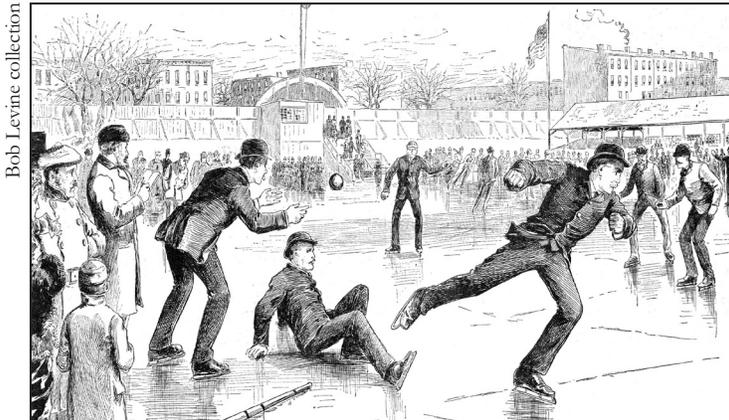
For more info and updates visit us at [www.parkslopeciviccouncil.org](http://www.parkslopeciviccouncil.org)

*House Tour continued from p.1*

of this **1889 Romanesque Revival home**, designed by distinguished architect Charles Pierrepont Henry Gilbert. The spacious and charming kitchen features stained-glass windows, a handsome fireplace and a coffered ceiling. The large mantelpiece in the parlor was acquired by the owners from a mansion on Manhattan's West Side. **4.** Lovely dentil moldings and elegant mantelpieces can be seen throughout this **1889 English Regency home**, designed by Charles Pierrepont Henry Gilbert. French 18th-century furnishings reside in the parlor. The study features a wonderful collection of 19th-century children's savings banks. **5.** The owners of this **1875 Neo-Grec** have preserved original detail and at the same time, created a warm, contemporary home for their family. Marble fireplaces and antique furniture complement a fine collection of photographs.

This year's tour begins at Poly Prep Lower School. For more information and ticket sales online and at merchant locations visit [parkslopeciviccouncil.org](http://parkslopeciviccouncil.org). Advance tickets are \$20; \$25 day of tour.

**Baseball on Ice from the Civic Council Archives**



Park Slope's Washington Baseball Park, at the present site of JJ Byrne Park and Middle School 51, served as the original ballfield for the team that was to become the Brooklyn Dodgers. The Park, pictured above in an 1884 Harper's Weekly illustration, was flooded in winter where the Brooklyn Baseball Club played exhibition baseball on ice skates.

**PARK SLOPE CIVIC COUNCIL**

Established 1896 as the South Brooklyn Board of Trade.  
Incorporated 1938.

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- Jeffrey Roth, First Vice President
- Joe Rydell, Second Vice President
- Jeffrey Roth, Treasurer
- Eliza Pepper, Assistant Treasurer
- Candace Woodward, Corresponding and Recording Secretary
- Cathy Sokil Milnikiewicz, Membership Secretary

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*Webmaster:* Peter Sohn / *Database Administrator:* Time Darden  
*Contributing Editor:* Louise Crawford / *Managing Editor:* Beryll Schiffer

*Mail:* P.O. Box 172, 123 Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215  
*Facebook:* Park Slope Civic Council / *Twitter:* @PkSicivCouncil  
*www.parkslopeciviccouncil.org / Telephone:* (347) 871-0477

The Park Slope Civic Council is a 501(c)3 organization

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P.O. Box 172, 123 Seventh Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11215, or sign up online at [www.parkslopeciviccouncil.org](http://www.parkslopeciviccouncil.org)

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